

GRACE NOTES

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

Natural Church Development moves into fall activities

The Natural Church Development Steering Committee reconvened in mid August to strategize next steps in Grace Church's redevelopment process. The team is reviewing its goals and evaluating the ongoing redevelopment effort. There was a strong feeling that others should be encouraged to participate on the Steering Committee - either as members of the team - or occasional guests. This team will be meeting every few weeks, beginning September 8. Speak to any team member for more information.

Two task teams were formed to work over the summer:

Gift Based Ministry Team

More than 20 Grace Church members (led by Central Council members) participated in the Gift Based Ministry pilot program this summer. Participants began by reading the book, *The 3 Colors of Ministry*. Through

Continued on page seven

Need help with the Gift Based Ministry test?

If you've been part of the Gift Based Ministry pilot program and have not completed the GBM test - help is available. At the August 24 forum, a few participants said they found the test a little daunting (there are 180 questions and then a tabulation). Others found it interesting and fun.

The "It's Fun" group has volunteered to assist those who have been struggling.

On Sunday, August 31, a few volunteers* will stay after church to assist those who would like help. Or, if you would like to meet one of the volunteers at a separate time, give them a call.

It doesn't take very long.

** Our volunteers are Lynn Burdett, Jean Burr, Linda Dunbrack, Linda Hilliard, Terri Taylor and Brad Watters.*

Christian Education September Schedule

September 7: Family Communion Sunday, children in service, cans for communion

September 14: Rally Day: Commission/Bless teachers and helpers. Children in service. Ice cream sundaes after service.

September 21: Sunday School Social for teachers, helpers and storytellers (9- 9:50 AM). Missions is launching the CE/Sunday School program year on Sept. 21 with a lesson on how to end homelessness. The kids will have a week to collect pledges for the walk if they want before the actual walk on Sept. 28. CE

Continued on page seven

Walk to Prevent Homelessness 2008 Countdown!

The fifth annual Walk to Prevent Homelessness is scheduled for Sunday, September 28 - 12:30-3:00 p.m. from Framingham Center Common to Brophy School and back. If you have decided to walk, please add your name to the sign-up sheet on the Missions Bulletin Board. The need this year during difficult economic times is particu-

Continued on page three

Grace Notes

Volume 10, Number 9

September 2008

❖ From the Pastor	2	❖ Ministry Teams	4-6
❖ Church Calendar		❖ Women's Lectio.....	6
❖ Fellowship/Library team.....	3	❖ Random Act of Grace.....	8

Note From the Pastor

Dear Ones,

What scenes from the Bible do you love? What images are moving, inspiring, tender, and meaningful to you? Mind you, I'm asking about scenes, not whole stories.

On a recent evening, I gathered with other people interested in church music to sing through a bunch of anthems. The evening was sponsored by a publisher hoping we would be moved to buy! The event convened in a Roman Catholic chapel that showed many images and scenes from the Bible. That's what's got me thinking about images as I write to you.

For example, here's one of my favorites.

I love the scene where Elijah gives up. It's 1 Kings 19:3-9. He has been pursued to a wild place and he is exhausted, at the end of his rope. He settles down to die, hoping for an end to trials, an end to contests, and an end to the difficulties attached to being a God's prophet.

"I have had enough, LORD," he said. "Take my life; I am no better than my ancestors."
(Which is to say, dead.)

Can you picture that? I picture a man worn out, lying on the ground, with his head on a stone and his eyes closed. When I picture that, I don't only see the character in a story. I see the face of defeat that I have seen in the eyes of so many people. I see the disappointment, the fatigue, the moment of turning

away from the tasks ahead. I know what that looks like because I've seen it in my face too. So, what I'm picturing is not just Elijah in the story but you and me in our own story at those moments when we turn away, weary and "done."

... And you remember don't you? That's not the whole scene.

All at once, an angel touched him and said, "Get up and eat." He looked around, and there by his head was a cake of bread baked over hot coals, and a jar of water.

The angel brings a message of new life, new energy, and more purpose for Elijah's life. That's the scene that is one of my favorites. That image is the promise Jesus has made to each one of us, in Matthew 11:28. "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." That is the promise of Jesus, the promise of the angel, and the promise of God.

That is the promise of each of you, beloved! You are called, and you have answered the call, to be the one to bring a cake of bread baked over hot coals, and a jar of water, to those who labor and are heavy laden. Just as you are sometimes Elijah, you are at other times the angel.

Who in your range of contacts is in need right now? Who could use the solace the angel brought to Elijah?

Peace and Blessing,
Brad

Church calendar - September

September 2	7:30 PM	Central Council	September 17	7:30 PM	Stewards meeting
September 7	Cans for Communion 10:00 AM 10:00 AM 12:00 PM	Worship Sunday School Confirmation class	September 21	10:00 AM	Worship Sunday School
September 8	10:30 AM 7:00 PM	Bible Study Lectio Potluck	September 22	10:30 AM	Bible Study
September 10	11:30 AM	Grace Women United	September 24	10:00 AM Eat at Eagles	Book Club
September 12	Stearns Farm pickup		September 26	Stearns Farm pickup	
September 14	Rally Sunday - Ice Cream! 10:00 AM	Worship	September 28	10:00 AM Chili luncheon Walk to Prevent Homelessness	Worship Sunday School
September 15	10:30 AM	Bible Study	September 29	10:30 AM	Bible Study

Walk to Prevent Homelessness *Continued from page one*

larly great. Metrowest Outreach Connection has received more requests for funds from families facing eviction this July than any month in their 5-year history – and this appears to be an upward trend. The one-time grants that MWOC gives to families in crisis are critically needed to keep these families out of the shelter system and in stable homes in their communities.

Now is the time for walkers to get pledge forms and start collecting those pledges. All pledges should be collected and handed in at registration on the Common on the day of the walk. Pledge forms will be available after church every Sunday in September, or you can download them from <http://www.mwoconnection.org>. There is no minimum amount of pledges to participate, but every walker who raises at least \$50 will be entered in a raffle for some great prizes donated by

local businesses. If you can't walk, but would like to sponsor someone, any member of the Missions Team can take your pledge or point out a walker to you. If you can give your time, but not your feet, on the day of the walk, volunteers are especially needed to sit in a shady spot on the Common to register walkers from 12:30-1:30, or at the water station at Brophy School from 1:00-2:30 p.m. If you would like to help, please contact Mary Memmott.

The Missions Team will offer a chili lunch for all walkers and volunteers for the walk from Grace immediately after church on September 28. Walkers can bring an appetizer or dessert to share, but you are also welcome to just come-as-you-are, and we'll make sure you have a good lunch before you step out. If you would like to help with the lunch, please contact the Missions Team, and join

Fellowship/Library Team making some changes



Have you seen the Fellowship Hall? There's now a cozy nook in the corner for socializing - or having a small meeting. The Library/Fellowship Hall Task Team purchased some benches and cushions,

Lynn Burdett donated a rug – and voila, our entryway has a whole new – and inviting look.

Meanwhile upstairs, team members have been busy sanding and staining two bookcases that will be used for the new Library/Multipurpose Room. The work is almost done, then we do some furniture shifting, get some books and that room will be available.

There is also a new and improved (and neater) bulletin board in the Fellowship area. Watch for more small improvements as we strive to make Grace Church more welcoming - and comfortable.

Furniture Fund reminder

We've already brought in more than \$200 in donations for the Fellowship Hall and Library. Thanks to those who have donated. Donations may be given to Nancy Brown or placed in the Sunday collection plate (write "Furniture Fund" on your check). Your help is most appreciated!

An invitation to "A Day of Spirit" on Saturday, Sept. 6

From Debbie Clark, Pastor of Edward Church

Greetings friends! I hope you have had a restful and enjoyable summer. I wanted to write and invite you to "A Day of Spirit" on Saturday, Sept. 6, from 10 a.m to 3 p.m. at Edwards Church. The idea is a day for renewal and gentle spiritual practice before things get really busy. The day will begin with a brief worship service at our outdoor labyrinth.

There will be two workshop sessions, with two offerings each time: Silent meditation, led by Bhanthe Aluth, and Qi Gong, in the morning, and Guided meditation and gentle yoga in the afternoon. Available all day will be: an outdoor and an indoor labyrinth, an art room with the opportunity to create "visual mantras," finger labyrinths, mandalas, etc., a quiet room for journaling, music in the sanctuary, a map for walking the Carol Getchell trail along the Sudbury River.

\$10 cost includes a simple lunch. (\$20 max per family; scholarships available). Please sign up by calling 508-877-2050. Child care available upon advance request. www.edwardschurch.org

Ministry Teams

Missions MT
Eleanor Crawford,
Chair
Mary Memmott
mission@
gracechurchucc.
org

See page one!
Sunday, Sept. 28
Walk to Prevent
Homelessness
12:30-3:00 p.m.
Framingham Centre
Common

Stewards
Jean Burr, Chair
Lynn Burdett
Frank Carney
Judy Sebastian
Tim Taylor

stewards@
gracechurchucc.org

Mission

Cans for Communion – September 7th

It's back-to-school – and the pantry is low on all kinds of staples – but especially some simple sandwich fixings. This month we are looking for: CANNED TUNA and MAYO (mayo in plastic jars, if possible). Donations go to Metrowest Harvest Food Pantry in Framingham. If you would like to help deliver the cans, please see Mary Memmott or sign up on the Missions bulletin board in the Fellowship Room. Your generosity is much appreciated.



Stearns Farm – help is always welcome



The harvest season is well under-way now, and pantry has been very grateful for the wonderful surprise of fresh produce on several Saturday mornings this summer. You can help us with produce and flower pick-up at the farm every other Friday afternoon/evening from now through October. We still need help with pick-up on the following dates this month: Sept. 12 and 26th. This is a family-friendly activity. Sign up on the Mission bulletin board or contact Ellie Crawford or Mary Memmott for more information.

You can expect produce from the farm at church on the following Sunday this month: September 28th. Bring your spare change and bills to make a free-will offering for what you take, and plan on bringing home something fresh and delicious from the farm on this Sunday – share with a neighbor and pass along a gift of Grace!

Stewards

Have you been in the building lately? If so, you must have noticed the new flooring, including the boxed-in foundation edges, in the fellowship hall.

We heard many positive comments about the new look even before the fellowship hall task team brought in the new furniture! Now it's really a bright, welcoming space. A big thank you to the task team and especially to those who contributed to the fund which made it possible.

The staining of the deck is a big improvement and work is now proceeding to prevent water from coming through to shower us as we enter the building.

Jokes of the Month

*Newsletter errors (not from Grace Notes)
Submitted by Jean Burr*

- Miss Charlene Mason sang 'I Will Not Pass This Way Again,' giving obvious pleasure to the congregation.
- For those of you who have children and don't know it, we have a nursery downstairs.
- Next Thursday there will be tryouts for the choir. They need all the help they can get.
- The Rector will preach his farewell message, after which the choir will sing: 'Break Forth Into Joy.'
- "The sermon this morning: "Jesus Walks on the Water." The sermon tonight: "Searching for Jesus."
- Ladies, don't forget the rummage sale. It's a chance to get rid of those things not worth keeping around the house. Bring your husbands.
- The peacemaking meeting scheduled for today has been canceled due to a conflict.
- Don't let worry kill you off – let the Church help.

Deacon MT
 Ruth Carney, Chair
 George Tynes
 Karolyne White

deacons@
 gracechurchucc.
 org

People of Grace,

We hope you enjoyed every moment of your summer! Labor Day will very shortly be with us and even though we have more weeks of summer left, it always seems to be over on Labor Day. September brings **Rally Day** and the beginning of church school. We look forward to seeing everyone back at Grace!

Our church is continuing to explore **Natural Church Development (NCD)**. It is an exciting journey to be on – to wish, to dream, to acknowledge who we are and where we are going, to realize our individual spiritual gifts and be able to use them to fulfill the promises of tomorrow! It really is exciting! So please participate in these gatherings over the next months.

If you would like to provide **flowers** for

the altar, please be in touch with Ruth Carney. If you wish to have her order flowers from our florist, the current price is \$35.00. If you have a green thumb and wish to bring flowers from your garden, also give Ruth a call to let her know (just in case someone else might be providing flowers that day).

We would like your **input around worship** – what speaks to you, what moves you and what fulfills you. Please let one of us know so it can be discussed in worship planning. Please do not assume any of us totally know your wants, desires or needs.

Every Sunday, things get done before, during and after worship. How would you like to **volunteer to be a lay reader, usher, greet or to prepare and serve coffee for the fellowship** time after worship on Sunday? (Thank you to all who have signed up or just pitched in.) Please take a moment to sign up for one of these opportunities. You will find the sign up sheets on the bulletin board.

Please do not forget that we care about your wellbeing and want to walk with you celebrating your joys, holding you in your sorrows, and just being there when you need us. God is with us and among us. God does and will provide.

May you always feel God’s blessings,
 The Deacon Ministry Team

Cathedral of the Pines

Sixteen people went on Grace’s “field trip” on August 17 to the Cathedral of the Pines in Rindge, NH. We worshiped at 10:00 AM at Grace and left from Grace around 11:30 AM.

We arrived at the Cathedral of the Pines and had lunch together at the pavilion (a huge open sided tent with picnic tables and benches). We even invited an engaged couple we met at the pavilion to join us on our tour. After lunch we met up with our guide, Ladonna, who spoke of the points of interest and gave us a history of the facility along with the tour. It was wonderful to have such an articulate person to bring the grounds of the cathedral to life. When our tour was over, Brad led us in worship. What a wonderful way to experience the worship area! The view behind the “Altar of the Nations” was blue skies, puffy white clouds, forest and Mount Monadnock – a truly spectacular sight, nature’s stained glass window. And we couldn’t have asked for better weather! After worship each of us explored the many gardens, the memorials, the other worship spaces, the museum and the gift shop.

The conversation in our car going home was we should do this again or just plan to have other “field trips” together. What do you think?

About Us

- Best wishes to **Debbie (Atkins) Damon** who is recovering at home, in Ohio, following several surgeries.
- **Martha Warren** has moved out of her house in Hopkinton and is living with her daughter in Milford.

We are still accepting gently used children’s books, art or school supplies, and slightly used sneakers for the Guerstons in Holliston. They clean everything and send packages weekly to Appalachia where there is always great need. (Although they don’t request donations of money, the cost of shipping is significant, so any monetary contributions would also be appreciated.)

Buy some mugs - for yourself, your family - and as gifts!



The order for Grace Church mugs has been placed! We hope everyone will be excited to purchase one (or more) so that we will then have the funds to purchase the other items to complete the visitors’ welcome gift.

At our next meeting, we will begin brainstorming ideas for monthly seminars of community interest and/or fellowship type programs. We will welcome your suggestions as well as your presence at our meetings. The next date will be announced in the church bulletin.

Women’s Lectio Potluck: September 8

We will gather at Grace on Monday, September 8th to kick off the next season of practicing the ancient art of Lectio Divina. We will start at 7:00 with a potluck dinner that is always a wonderful surprise. There is always plenty of food, so come and join us for an evening of opening to the spirit. All women are welcome.

The following description of Lectio Divina comes from “Accepting the Embrace of God: The Ancient Art of Lectio Divina” by Fr. Luke Dysinger OSB (the Benedictine Monks are often

credited with keeping this practice alive through the ages and reintroducing it to modern Christians). IN lectio divina we offer ourselves to God; and we are people in motion. In ancient times this inner spiritual motion was described as a helix - an ascending spiral. Viewed in only two dimensions it appears as a circular motion back and forth; seen with the added dimension of time it becomes a helix, an ascending spiral by means of which we are drawn ever closer to God. The whole of our spiritual lives were viewed in this way, as a gentle oscillation between spiritual activity and receptivity by means of which God unites us ever closer to Himself. In just the same way the steps or stages of lectio divina represent an oscillation back and forth between these spiritual poles. In lectio divina we recognize our underlying spiritual rhythm and discover many different ways of experiencing God’s presence - many different ways of praying.

This and That

Picnic Table needed for play yard



Christian Ed would like to have a picnic table for the children’s play yard. Before we look into buying one, the congregation is being asked if there is anyone who might have a table that they would donate to the church. Or - perhaps some of our craftspeople might consider building a table. Speak to Mary Memmott if you can help out.

Gift Based Ministry *Continued from page one*



Team members:
Ruth Bodge, Nancy Brown, Ruth Carney, Ellie Crawford, Linda Dunbrack, Linda Hilliard, Terri Taylor, Brad Watters

the reading and a series of open forums, participants have begun to form a shared understanding of how God has provided each of us with spiritual gifts. One interesting activity has been using The Three-Color Gifts Test to learn what spiritual gifts we have received. Some of these are “manifest,” which means we already use them somewhat, and some are “latent,” which means they are likely areas for fruitful exploration.

Reactions to the summer program have been extremely positive. Some participants assumed they knew what all their gifts were and were surprised - and pleased - to discover that they identified themselves as having spiritual gifts that they didn't expect. Many a summer church gathering had members laughingly saying “Do you believe I have the “gift” of voluntary poverty (or apostle or miracles)?”

Fortunately the *The 3 Colors of Ministry* book helps readers interpret each gift. For example, those with the spiritual gift of “voluntary poverty” don't have to immediately give away all worldly goods! Instead, people with this gift are able to make a glad and conscious choice to live at a lower standard of living than they could choose, so that they may free up more resources to share, stand in solidarity with those whose poverty is not a choice, lower their impact on the environment, or do so for other reasons.

The next step will focus on gathering a list of the summer participant's gifts - and analyzing how they match and vary from the current “ministries” of Grace Church. At that August 24 forum meeting, members began to identify the “ministries” of Grace Church. “Ministries” are not exactly the same as the tasks of existing Ministry Teams and Task Teams, although they come from the same raw material which is “what is it that we do?”

Note: Just because someone identi-

fies that they have a spiritual gift, he or she does not have to volunteer to exercise that gift for Grace Church. This phase of Natural Church Development is simply assembling a list of church ministries and personal spiritual gifts as a way to understand our church in a deeper way that is more connected to what God has in store for us. This is one of many steps designed to evolve our church toward greater health, greater love, greater satisfaction, and greater purpose.

This fall, Gift Based Ministry Part Two will be launched so that those who did not take part in the summer program, can now read *The 3 Colors of Ministry* and discover their own gifts.

Passionate Spirituality Team

Unlike the Gift Based Ministry Task Team, which has a formal program, passionate spirituality is a more subtle undertaking for the church. The approach of this team is to change small things around spirituality in the ways we meet and worship.

Christian Ed

Continued from page one

has noticed that the kids seem to most enjoy Sunday School and to learn best when taking action in the community and elsewhere to help solve problems. We are making a concerted effort this year to integrate curriculum with mission actions, such as collecting and delivering food to the Food Pantry and distributing sandwiches to the hungry at the Worcester homeless service.

September 28 The official “Come Join the Circle” curriculum will begin on Sept.28 with the “Prophet Jonah” unit. Missions is hosting a chili lunch after service and then we'll all head over to Framingham Center green for the Walk to Prevent Homelessness.



Summer reading for the Book Club is *Lilah* by Mark Halter. The Book Club will meet on Wednesday, Sept. 24 at 10 AM.

Grace's List

TiVo DIGITAL RECORDER

SERIES #2 (not for use with Direct TV) \$75.00 to church.

Jean Burr 508-872-1082

NOTE: Fee of \$299.00 to cover lifetime connection has been paid in full.

KENMORE CHEST FREEZER

– 18.1 CF 50" wide 36" high 28" deep Must pick up

Donation (all to church) Leo Mogan 508-397-2840

CANON POWERSHOT S30 Digital

Camera includes case and 2 memory cards (128 each), plus all manuals and software. \$75.00 to church. Jean Burr 508-872-1082

MACINTOSH Computer G3. Old desktop computer with OS 9.2 and 128 MB memory. Keyboard, mouse. Loaded with older version programs: Word, PowerPoint, Excel, Photoshop and Pagemaker. Internet connection. Perfect for child or novice who just wants to play around. Donation (all to church). Linda Hilliard 508-879-5943

Random Acts of Grace

I have been thinking a lot lately about what is really important in life – to love and be loved, to cherish and be cherished, to value someone and be valued by someone, to care and to be cared for. This further led me to think about what all this means to me and that led to this article. Have you ever had someone do a kindness for you that you never asked for, but really needed? Was it someone you know or a complete stranger? Does this person know how much it touched you or how grateful you felt?

In June, Frank and I went to Maine for my aunt's 99th birthday party. My aunt had been moved to a brand new facility and my cousin had given me the address and directions. I was familiar with that area of route one and my cousin had told me what "landmark" to turn by, so I didn't bring the address with me. We turned on to the street and the facility was supposed to be near route one. (Unfortunately,

my cousin gave me the wrong landmark to turn at.) We drove and drove and drove and never saw anything that resembled any kind of facility. I pulled over to the side of the road and called my cousin on my cell phone and there was no answer at her home. I looked up and saw a woman come out of her home and get into a pick-up truck. I quickly pulled in next to her and Frank got out and asked her if she knew of a new nursing home in the area (I also didn't remember the name of the place – doesn't it seem to work out that way). This angel said she knew exactly where it was and to follow her – she would take us to the place. It was several streets (and miles) away. As I was following this pick-up, I knew God had led us to this angel – she had a fish with "Jesus" in the middle of it on her bumper. And we even made it on time to the party!

Grace and Peace,
Ruth Carney

Grace Notes Technology Glitch

Tech gremlins struck and the *Grace Notes* email list was lost. We've attempted to reconstruct it and probably have about 75% of the addresses recovered.

If you have a relative or friend who you added to the electronic mailing list in the last year or two, please resend their email to linda@hilliardcommunications.com

Grace Congregational Church, UCC

PO Box 1481 • 76 Salem End Road • Framingham, MA 01702

Pastor: Brad Watters
pastor@gracechurchucc.org

Moderator: Linda Hilliard
moderator@gracechurchucc.org

Christian Education: Ronda Yeomans
christianed@gracechurchucc.org

Deacons: Ruth Carney
deacon@gracechurchucc.org

Mission: Ellie Crawford
mission@gracechurchucc.org

Stewards: Jean Burr
steward@gracechurchucc.org

Members at Large: Terri Taylor
atlarge@gracechurchucc.org

Office Administrator:

Kab Rabinowitz
office@gracechurchucc.org

Music Director: Susan Minor
musicdirector@gracechurchucc.org

Missionary in Indonesia
Susan Frans
sefrans@kupang.wasantara.net.id

508-872-3342

Websites:

<http://www.gracechurchucc.org>
www.macucc.org (Mass Conf.)
www.ucc.org (UCC)