

GRACE NOTES

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

Holy Week at Grace



Palm Sunday, April 17, 2011

10:00 AM Service

We will greet the morn with loud Hosannas moving from Jesus' jubilant entry into Jerusalem and journey to the Passion of Christ. We will celebrate and receive our palms. The Easter plants for our shut-ins will be available for the Buddies to pick up.

Maundy Thursday, April 21, 2011 – 7:00 PM Service

What is Maundy Thursday, the Thursday of Holy Week, all about? The word

“Maundy” is a shortened version of the Latin word *mandatum*, which means commandment. At the Last Supper, Jesus gave his friends a new commandment. He told the disciples, “I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another” (John 13:34, NRSV). As Jesus commanded, we should make a special effort to exhibit our love and respect for one another. We will gather for worship at 7 PM and celebrate communion together.

Easter Sunday, April 24, 2011 – 10:00 AM Service

Our Alleluias have returned to worship! We will joyously celebrate the resurrection of our Lord and Savior, Jesus the Christ! We will sing, hear the “good news” and celebrate communion together.

Larger Space Project Update

Linda Dunbrack

After a long process, the Space Team is pleased to announce that we have found exactly the right architect to lead us through our decision about what and whether to build. After culling through 11 sets of qualifications that were submitted, we chose 5 firms to interview. We conducted the interviews in late February and early March, and found that we had chosen 5 excellent firms, each of which had something

Meet Our Architect: [Back page](#)

unique and special to offer the church.

It appeared that the decision could be a difficult one, and people had their own biases both before and after various interviews. However, the congregation prayed for us the morning before we made our decision. I do not believe I would be exaggerating if I said that everyone was stunned when every one who had a preference had the same firm in mind. I certainly felt as though God was with us.

On March 7, the Larger Space Team reached a consensus on a firm for providing a feasibility study and doing the design work for our planned expansion of our

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Pastor's Message

Dear Ones,

Do you observe birthdays? If I haven't said Happy Birthday to you in a year or more, then Happy Birthday!

Birthdays are on my mind because my family has a lot of spring-born folk so this is a time when there are phone calls and cards flying around. It is easy to believe that it makes a difference when one is born. Think of astrology's insights about people born "under" one sign or another. Or that poem about how "Monday's child is fair of face, Tuesday's child is full of grace, etc."

Perhaps you are someone who has found value in these observations? I know that there was a time in my life when reading the daily horoscope for Gemini (my "birth sign") in the *Globe* would interest me.

Do you check yours? Have you found them to be insightful, helpful, or true?

Actually, those kernels of advice interested me as puzzles to solve. I would look ahead to the day I expected and ask myself where during the day this particular kernel might come true.

For me, you see, the meaning comes after the event. It is after an event that I look for how and what the event will mean in my life. It is how I have come to terms with the folk wisdom that says, "everything happens for a reason." I assert that this is true – but only in retrospect. In other words, I don't think there is a predictive, planned

engine or god who figures out that a flat tire tomorrow morning is just what Brad needs or the fate of the world needs to have happen. For me, the meaning comes after the event.

For example, we – we humans – have recently been visited by earthquake and tsunami in Japan. We were thrown about like playthings and our boats and buildings flipped and flattened like they were toys too. We lost family members and friends and places where we lived and worked and played. We, some of us, were killed. The event did not happen to us so that some meaningful thing will happen in the world. That's not the way the earthquake works and it is not the way our God works. Yet, from these events, we will learn, we will be changed, and we will create meaning. Stay tuned, there will be meaning after the event.

Like your precious life, my brothers and sisters. Your precious life is full of meaning – in story and wisdom and potential and accomplishment! All this meaning came after your birth day, right? So I give thanks that we are in each others' lives, connected across time and space. I give thanks that in the midst of even the saddest of events, birthdays still occur. May we all find meaning and joy in these recurring celebrations of life. ...and cake.

*Peace and Blessing,
Pastor Brad*

Calendar - April

April 2	8:00 AM	Men's Group	April 19	7:30PM	Stewards meet
April 3	9:00 AM	Singers	April 21	7:00 PM	Maundy Thursday
	10:00 AM	Intergenerational Worship			
		Cans for Communion	April 24	EASTER SUNDAY	
April 10	9:00 AM	Singers		9:00 AM	Singers
	10:00 AM	Worship		10:00 AM	Worship
	10:00 AM	Sunday School		10:00 AM	Sunday School
	11:30 PM	Kitchen Shower & Luncheon	April 27	10:00 AM	Book Club
April 17	PALM SUNDAY		April 30	10:00 AM	Styrofoam Day
	9:00 AM	Singers			
	10:00 AM	Worship			
	10:00 AM	Sunday School			

*Office Hours:
Wednesdays/Thursdays 9:00 AM - 1:00 PM*

Kitchen, Etc. Shower

Kitchen, Etc. Shower and Luncheon

Sunday, April 10 (immediately after church)

Our kitchens are getting a little bare of essentials. Check out the “Apron Wall” in the Fellowship Hall for a card display of items we especially need.

Please select a card(s) and bring your Shower Gift to our Kitchen, Etc. Shower on April 10. All are welcome to join us for lunch and admire the gifts.

No need to wrap your present(s), bring them in a bag (which we will recycle).

Note: With some of the big items (e.g., Tray Tables or Stockpot), consider sharing the expense with someone.

There is a luncheon signup sheet on the bulletin board.

All are welcome, but we want to be sure we plan enough food.



Brunch after church

Due to the Kitchen Etc. Shower on April 10, Faith in Action decided not to schedule an additional brunch after church for the month. The next brunch will be in May.

Eighteen church members attended the brunch at Bella Costa in March.



**See Yard Sale
Article on
Page 6**

Styrofoam and May Baskets

Styrofoam Collection Day

...and Plastic Flatware that has been rinsed
and packed in separate containers

Plus: Sale of May Baskets

**Saturday, April 30
10:00 AM to 3:00 PM**

Volunteers will be needed throughout the day. If you can lend a hand, please speak to Jean Burr so that she can set a schedule.



Deacons

People of Grace,
There's something
better coming

This season of Easter is a special time for Christians to celebrate the ultimate reason for our hope: Christ is risen, and invites us to rise with him to new life.



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
Deacons

Ruth Carney, Karolyne White

- Easter is an invitation to try again with God's help to break that addiction we had given up all hope of ever breaking. *There's something better coming. ...*

- Easter is an opportunity to reach out to our neighbors who, in our busyness, we neglect. *There's something better coming. ...*

- Easter is an invitation to look at our lack of love and seek God for compassion. *There's something better coming. ...*

- Easter is a chance to regain vision of what can be! *There's something better coming. ...*

- Easter is an opportunity to renew our faith. *There's something better coming. ...*

- Easter is a chance to "renew our strength and mount up with wings as eagles; to run and not faint." *There's something better coming. ...*

—Homiletics, adapted

We hope you are keeping safe and warm. Even though the calendar says it is Spring, the weather can still turn on us. Please do not take any unnecessary chances. You are important in the life of our church. If we need to cancel worship or any other event for weather related reasons, we are listed on The Boston Channel, so tune to WCRB Channel 5 for the listing.

Please do not forget that we care

New Team Formed

At the request of the Leadership Team and Stewards, a new team has been formed at Grace: The Shape of Ministry at Grace Team. Its task will be similar to that of a Personnel Committee. The member will undertake job evaluations for the church staff and review Pastor Brad's contract (which is up in June 2011).

This team's role is to gather information, which will then be passed on to the Leadership Team. Due to the privacy aspect of job reviews, the Shape Team has agreed to a covenant of confidentiality and meetings will be closed. Of course results will be shared through Leadership, but the ongoing information gathering will be confidential.

The team, which has just launched, is still developing its plans. However, all active church members will have an opportunity to share their views and thoughts about the shape of ministry at Grace.

The team members are: Linda Hilliard (convener) and Laura Buck, Ruth Carney, Judy Sebastian and Daleen Perkins. Please feel free to share thoughts and ideas with team members.

These Days

A question for buddies and other church members. Do you take and use copies of *These Days*, the little magazine with daily meditations and devotions?

Grace Women United is wondering whether they should order more copies. Speak to Ruth Bodge if you read - or your buddy reads - this handy little magazine. We will adjust the count accordingly.

Stewards

We have updated our "Red Book" (for lack of a better name). This book can be found in the Stewards mailbox in the office. Pages of information about the church building, contacts, supplies, etc. are there for anyone interested. Please do not remove the book or make changes. Suggestions, however, are welcome and can be made to any of the Stewards, Brad, Brownie, or Nancy.

Jean Burr

Faith in Action

The showing of the movie, *Fireproof*, originally scheduled for March 25, was postponed. Because of interest shown, it will be rescheduled for an evening in the near future.

Our next two activities, the Styrofoam Collection Day on April 30, and, even greater in need, the Yard Sale on May 14, are times when many volunteers will be needed.

Please let Jean Burr, know if you are able to help out on either or both days. More details can be found throughout this issue of *Grace Notes*.

Jean Burr

Missions

“Cans for Communion” April 3rd

The Framingham “Hope” Food Pantry is still settling in to their new location at the Framingham Civic League building. For this month’s collection let’s help them re-stock their shelves with PASTA and PEANUT BUTTER. Remember, expired or damaged cans cannot be safely donated. If you would like to help deliver the cans, please sign up in the fellowship hall or see Mary Memmott for details.

Comedy for A Cause Food, Fun, and Fundraising

Thank you to all who attended our “Comedy for a Cause” dinner on March 19th. We raised \$166 -- this will help us to supply the Hope Food Pantry with fresh produce throughout the year, as we continue our membership in Stearns Farm. Our young comedians appreciated the support of the congregation –as one remarked after, “I was nervous until I heard the first person laugh, then I was OK.” Thank you for sharing your laughter!

Lenten “Carbon Fast” Update

There is still time to follow the Lenten Carbon Fast if you are not already. One idea from the fast worth thinking about – “consider that 20% of the earth’s people use 80% of its resources.” We’re all in that resource-heavy 20%. What can we do to reduce our impact? You can join the fast, and find ways to reduce your impact, at the Earthcare Framingham blog – www.earthcareframingham.blogspot.com.

Mary Memmott

Christian Education

The Grace Church faith community thanks all those who taught our children more about Christianity over the last month whether by word or example.

Special thanks go to our Sunday School teachers, helpers and to Pastor Brad for his intentionally intergenerational services. Thank you to Aaron Dunbrack for his childcare services over the last few weeks. We would like to welcome (back) Raechel Belloli as our new child care person. Both Aaron and Raechel work very well with the children and we feel blessed to have them helping.

This month the children (and

adults) learned by doing as they rehearsed and presented a Comedy Night Dinner Theater for all to enjoy. We practiced patience, perseverance, faith in God, and many other important lessons as we put our hands to the concrete process of doing God’s work. The delicious soup we enjoyed that night was created with vegetables from the farm’s root cellar. Proceeds raised from the event went to help pay for our share at the Stearns Organic Farm. Buying a share at this community farm allows us to bring fresh produce to both the Framingham Hope Food Pantry, and also to share it with

our church community. During planting season, having a share at the farm enables us to see the food cycle from it’s beginnings and to work for what we grow. This helps us to better understand our neighbors around the world who grow their own food every day. Thank you to all the children and adults who worked hard to make the dinner theatre a success. Thanks also to our audience who generously sponsored our efforts.

For Sundays in April, the children will participate in intentional intergenerational services in worship leading up to and including Palm Sunday and Easter. Conversations are beginning among teachers, parents and Pastor Brad regarding how the Christian Education program might next grow and develop to best serve the needs of our children and adults. Happy Easter!

Ronda Yeomans

A Central Association opportunity

The UCC Central Association seeks lay and clergy participation on the Board of Directors and Committee on Ministry. For information about the tasks and meetings times, or if you are interested in being nominated for one of these fine committees, contact Rev. Doreen Oughton at pastorfccleicester@verizon.net or 978-846-6498.

YARD SALE!

All Church (and Guests) Yard Sale

**Saturday, May 14 (rain date May 21)
9:00 AM to 2:00 PM**

Half of the income from the sale will go to the church's Larger Space Fund; the other half will go to the Metro West Outreach Connection (sponsors of the Walk to Prevent Homelessness).

Church members are encouraged to donate items to the sale. We are also going to rent tables (\$25 each) to those who would like to set up in our yard.

Please spread the word. Outside sellers will be required to bring their own tables and clean up after themselves.

Although this is NOT a rummage sale, we will have room available for clean, nearly new clothing.

Morning coffee and Lunch will be available. Donations of breakfast snacks and desserts would be welcomed.

Volunteers are needed to sort and price merchandise, help with set up (and break down), staff the tables and the lunch

Donations may be brought to the church the week of May 9.

Note: Since we want this to be an outside yard sale - any decision about postponing due to rain will be made by Thursday, May 12.

Speak to Jean Burr or Linda Hilliard.
There will be a volunteer signup sheet in April.

Grace Women United

Family Mission Project

Early in May, Grace Women United will be shipping 20 school kits to Church World Service (CWS) for distribution to those in need. The items for these kits have been purchased, and the cloth bags which are required for each kit have been made. We are grateful to our Sunday School children who will assemble the kits.

CWS is also asking for health kits like those which we sent last year, following the Haiti earthquake. We are inviting you, therefore, to pick up a baggie, with a list of items, any time during April, and make life a wee bit better for someone, somewhere. The cost to do this should be less than \$10. Grace Women will pay the \$2 shipping charge for any kits turned in by the end of the month. Contact Lynn Burdett if there are questions.

Members asked to pay Denominational dues

The Grace Church Stewards continue to ask members to voluntarily pay their Mass Conference denominational dues, (\$18.60 annually).

A number of members have already responded - thank you!

Please make your check out to Grace Church and write Conference Dues on the memo line. Note: The \$18.60 covers individuals, not family units.

If possible, why not up your check to \$25.00 to help defray the cost for another church member?

Meet Our Architect: Graham Ruggie, Janez Design & Development

As the owner and architect of Janez Design, Graham Ruggie brings a rich background of architectural experience to each project. As important as his Masters of Architecture, Graham also brings critical Management experience from his years in the hospitality industry and a management degree from Boston University. He understands the importance of setting expectations, service, delivery and the diligence required to deliver.

Janez provide quality design and project management. Trusted staff join the practice on a project basis, based on their skill and experience with the firm and allow the practice to meet current demand with low overhead.

Janez has experience on a range of project sizes, from 1.3 million square feet to a residential addition. Clients benefit from individualized attention, a team environment and the ability to anticipate project "curveballs." The result is a pleasing design with quality documents and an advocate throughout the process.

References for Graham Ruggie

"Graham is a great guy and a good listener. He's very detailed oriented, cautious and smart. We were so pleased with his work, we are talking to him about doing a feasibility study on two other projects. His rates are better than most big firms because he doesn't have the overhead. Even though he's a smaller firm, he's got good connections to suppliers and contractors."

"Graham is a nice guy. The big

thing is he listens. Unlike a lot of architects, he doesn't have an ego. We were worried about going before the town [Wellesley] and he was with us every step of the way. We did not have a hard time with the town. He also met with the inspector and answered all the questions. Graham is all about service - he stays in touch by emails - meets with you - and always gets back to you. He stayed within our time frame and budget."

"We needed a building renovation and Graham was great to work with. We didn't have a lot of money and just wanted a bare bones job, nothing fancy. Graham kept within our tight budget. And he gave us several alternatives to chose between. One thing we especially liked was that Graham thought outside the box. We needed a new front entrance. Graham came up with an idea that was better than anything we had envisioned. His designs made our building feel very welcoming. We would definitely recommend him."

Space Team

Continued from page one

space. Of course, we did our due diligence and we checked the references. It was not surprising that the firm received rave reviews from its clients, reviews that reflected the positive qualities the team saw that led to the selection. Included (above) is some background on the firm and some of the comments we received from former clients.



Book Club

The Book Club will meet on April 27 at 10:00 AM in the church library. We are reading *The Psysick Book* of Deliverance Dane* by Katherine Howe. For details, contact Lynn Burdett. All are welcome to attend book club meetings. (*correct spelling)

Grace Women United

Grade Women United will be going out to lunch on Wednesday, April 13. Location to be announced.

Grace Congregational, UCC

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