

GRACE NOTES

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

We're Going Green!



Let's get serious about recycling: Faith in Action has placed green recycling bins in the fellowship hall and in the upstairs kitchen. Please use them as directed on the lists posted. Although pick-up service by the town is not available to non-profits, FIA members are prepared to take the contents of the bins

home or to the recycling center.

There are two advantages to this program, the first being apparent. Secondly, the Stewards have decreased the dumpster pick-ups from two a month to one. This is the first step in a goal to eliminate the dumpster entirely. We can do this, but only if all members are committed to recycling when possible, and also sharing the responsibility of taking filled trash bags home to include in their



curbside removal. If successful, we won't have an ugly dumpster in our parking lot, the need to fence it in to meet the planning board requirement, and we'll free up some more parking!



Grace Church receives town's site plan approval

Great news! At a public hearing on July 12, the Framingham Planning Board gave Grace Church site plan approval for 76 Salem End Road.

Since purchasing 76 Salem End Road last year, Grace has been awaiting town approval regarding our use of the building. Site plan review involves the various town departments (engineers, safety, conservation, fire, police and so on) approving our use of the property.

At the July 12 Planning Board hearing, our attorney, Stephen Dawley, along with Walter Brown, answered all questions posed by the board (there were several Grace members in the audience). After a 45-minute discussion, we were unanimously approved. The one caveat was that we need to put a privacy fence around our dumpster (or get rid of the dumpster).

Reactions from those attending the meeting were favorable. It was felt that our attorney did a fine job of representing Grace Church. The Planning Board members were felt to be cooperative and supportive.

Grace Notes

Volume 9, Number 8

August 2007

❖ Pastor's Notes	2	❖ Financial Update	5
❖ Dedication Sunday	3	❖ Housekeeping Help	6
❖ Church calendar	3	❖ Youth Mission Notes	7
❖ Ministry Teams	4-5	❖ Summer Christmas	8

Pastor's Note

Dear Ones,

I am thinking a lot about death and preparation for dying these days. I think that the recent passing of George Sommer, Carl Sydow, and Martha French makes death feel very present to me. I've just learned that my Uncle Brad, who my family and I visited in Denver earlier this month, died quietly on Friday, July 27th. With all these thoughts, I thought I might share with you something I wrote a few years ago. Imagine this story with me.

An older man (not in our congregation) visits with his adult children, gathered for some holiday. In the midst of many conversations, he finds himself discussing what he wants when his faculties fail and his life starts to end. He is not in any immediate danger. He sticks to the diet and activity plans that he has made with various experts, his doctor, the trainer at the gym, a nutritionist at the senior center, etc. Nothing is working to destroy his vital organs. He simply knows that delicate decisions will be made in the foreseeable future and he is someone who has always tried to plan ahead.

His adult children have mixed reactions. One leaves the room, unable to bear the conversation. Another is sarcastic, judging that the father is being self-centered and self-indulgent and why does he have to bring them into this maudlin conversation anyway? A third child withholds comment, trying to understand which way the conversational

wind is blowing. Yet another has been encouraging to the older man and another is absent, having been unable to make it for the family gathering.

How would you add yourself to this story? Instead of an older man, perhaps the story is about an older woman. Maybe there are not so many "children" in the family. Perhaps a spouse is part of this gathering; or a sister; or a friend who is always around. Maybe even the pastor has been called to be a resource, to offer a word of prayer, or just to be a part of the mix. I think it will be hard for the older man or older woman to ask to have this conversation. It may be embarrassing. It may feel unsafe, if one can't be sure that the others will be kind and supportive.

What I would like for each of you is at least these things.

- 1) I hope that you will believe that you deserve to be the center of this imaginary conversation. You are worth the attention of other people, particularly family and friends.
- 2) I hope that you will come to understand that the imaginary conversation is a gift from you to your friends and family. Your invitation to participate gives to others the way for them to love you and to care for you.
- 3) I hope that you will consider how your Christian faith has spoken to people through the ages about the end of life.

On that third point, we say that God loves us, each one. We

say that the meaning of Easter morning when Jesus bursts free from death means that for God, the finality of death is not final.

Death is the ordinary thing. It is as simple as climbing over a low, stone wall. It is wading across a shallow brook. It is as ordinary as walking through a different door, which has suddenly opened.

So planning for the ending need not be burdensome. It can be "down to earth" and it can be "matter of factly". For you, the Holy Spirit sings about extraordinary life, a song that never ends. God has something else in store for us, and it is something extraordinary.

Peace and Blessing,
Pastor Brad

Coffee collections

On July 15, Grace worshiped on Framingham Common with Edwards and Plymouth Churches. There were two collections in this service.

• **Hot Coffee for a Hot Month: Helping local homeless shelters welcome guests with a cup of hot coffee, as well as a safe place to stay. Donations of any type of ground coffee during the month of July.**

• **The loose offering was donated to Holy Joe's Cafe, a fund for chaplains in the U.S. Armed Forces. The funds buy coffee for service folks in Iraq and Afghanistan. \$185.50 was collected.**



Dedication Sunday meeting

There will be a job for everyone in preparing and hosting Grace Church's September 16 Dedication Sunday.

A planning meeting will be held on Wednesday, August 8, beginning at 7:00 PM.

Many existing teams - as well as new volunteers - are encouraged to attend this planning meeting. For example, we hope to have representatives from the Grounds and Decorating teams. Publicity will need to attend. We'll want the children involved so a CE rep (or a parent) might also want to attend this August 8 meeting.

A few new teams will be formed just for the Dedication event - a secretarial team to address envelopes, a collation team to coordinate food, a worship team to plan the service, and a welcome/greeters group. We'll also need a logistical team.

There's a job for everyone! Please plan on participating. If you're unable to make it on August 8, but are willing to lend a hand, speak to Linda Hilliard or Pastor Brad.

Out of the Dedication project, we're hoping to create a new team - for now called Visual Hospitality. Over time, members of this team will consider Grace Church from the perspective of visitors and guests (from the placement of a cross to overall ambience).

Save the Date! Fourth Annual Walk to Prevent Homelessness

Sunday, September 24 • 12:30-3:00 p.m.

Framingham Center Common
to Brophy School and back

We had a great group of families and friends walk last year from Grace - we hope many of you will return and we invite new walkers and helpers to join us.

All the funds raised go to a local program that helps prevent eviction or foreclosure for families in financial crisis. We will need walkers, sponsors, volunteers for the check-in booth, etc.

Please put this date on your calendars!

If your business or employer would like to sponsor a mile of the route, contact Mary Memmott.

Sponsors are an important part of making the walk a success. Business sponsors will receive recognition along the route, and of course all donations are tax-deductible.

Church calendar - August

Meetings at 76 Salem End Road unless otherwise noted.

August 1 7:00 PM Healing Service

August 4 Stewards spreading loam at church - come and help!

August 5 8:30 AM Choir rehearsal
10:00 AM Worship
Cans for Communion

August 6 10:00 AM Bible Study
7:30 PM Missions

August 7 7:30 PM Central Council

August 8 7:00 PM Worship
7:30 PM Dedication Team meeting

August 9 6:00 PM Deacons
7:30 PM Women's Lectio

August 12 8:30 AM Choir rehearsal
10:00 AM Worship

August 13 10:00 AM Bible Study

August 15 7:00 PM Worship
7:30 PM Stewards

August 17 Turning Point Shelter

August 19 8:30 AM Choir rehearsal
10:00 AM Worship

August 20 10:00 AM Bible Study

August 22 Eagles (lunch and dinner)
7:00 PM Worship

August 26 8:30 AM Choir rehearsal
10:00 AM Worship

August 27 10:00 AM Bible Study

August 29 7:00 PM Worship

Christian Ed.
 Rob Lovewell
 Daleen Perkins
 Ronda Yeomans

*christianed@
 gracechurchucc.org*



Help with the church history

Are you interested in Grace Church history? Do you have a spare hour or two occasionally? If so, Grace Kimball would very much like to have your help sorting and filing a multitude of papers and artifacts. Please talk to Grace and offer your help!

“Camp Grace” Fun in the Sun!

Many thanks to Mary Memmott, Ronda Yeomans, Terri Taylor, Jan and Jackie Norling, Christine Collins, Joanne Larkins, Linda Dunbrack, Linda Hilliard, Karolyne White, Rob Lovewell and everyone for teaming together to make “Camp Grace” a reality for the children this summer. These fun, casual, outdoor Christian Education sessions applied a “camping” approach to God. We need God just as much as we need Food, Water, Shelter and Friends in order to survive. Each week we explored how God is our food, our water, our shelter and our friend. The children spent time in song, prayer, and a hands-on activity each week focused on each of these themes. Mary even sneaked making s’mores in solar ovens into the curriculum, so we could not help but have fun.

For August, no formal children’s Sunday School sessions are planned, however Christian education for all ages will be included in the regular services as always.

CE Curriculum:

Many thanks to Daleen Perkins for researching the many curriculum possibilities for the 2007-2008 Christian Education school year. After prayer, thought and deliberation, the Christian Education Ministry Team (CEMT) agreed that the “Come Join the Circle” curriculum would best meet the needs of our students, teachers, helpers and parents this year. This flexible curriculum uses multiple learning approaches including hands-on, music, service, food and games. Unit resources provide all we will need in terms of leader training and planning, materials lists, resource sheets, visual aids, a music CD and at-home resources for families.

Three CJC curriculum units have been purchased for use in the fall semester. The efficacy of the program will be assessed in December to determine whether we will continue with this approach in the spring semester.

Class Grouping:

The CEMT shifted the class grouping to better suit needs and resources. The children will be divided into two groups of 9 learners each. This approach ensures that child: adult ratios in both classrooms are less than 5:1 while allowing one less adult to staff classrooms each week than with the three group approach. The Primary Class will include the younger students, ages 3 to 8 years old, and will be led by one teacher with two helpers. The Primary Class will make use of both classrooms as needed. The Junior Class will be composed of 9 to 13 year old students led by one teacher and one helper. The Junior class will meet in the “Function Room” and use the kitchen for artwork, crafts or “messy” projects.

Class Schedule:

Over the course of any given month, the first Sunday of the month will continue to be “Family / Communion” Sunday with the children collecting the cans for the food pantry at the time of the offering. The second and third Sundays of the month will be “Traditional Classroom” Sundays where all the children will meet in the function room for an initial Opening Worship and then split into 2 age-based groups. The fourth Sunday of the month will be Story Teller Sunday. This will be a multi-age session which will begin with all the students meeting in the function room for Opening

Continued on next page

Ministry Teams

Missions Ministry Team
Christine Collins
Eleanor Crawford,
Chair
Mary Memmott

mission@gracechurchucc.org

Stewards
Dianne Belloli,
Chair
Lynn Burdett
Frank Carney
Judy Sebastian
Tim Taylor

stewards@gracechurchucc.org

Mission

Cans for Communion Collection August 5th

This month (Aug. 5th) we are especially looking for donations of TOILET PAPER, DIAPERS (unopened packages, please), and BEANS (especially beans with protein -- such as kidney, pinto, black, or garbanzo beans), but all donations of non-perishable foods are welcome. Thank you for your continued support of the SMOC food pantry!

Stewards

The Stewards Ministry team is looking for some volunteers to wash the windows inside and outside of the church before we have our Open House Dedication in September. We will be at the church on August 4th to spread loam, mulch and yard clean-up so window washing would be a good idea.

We are going to start setting the alarm in the building. If you have not been taught how to unalarm the building or if you do not have a code yet, please contact Dianne or Tim Taylor. We need this done ASAP.

As always, if you are away this summer, please remember your pledges and mail them to the PO Box.

Please notify the Stewards if you need to use the building at any time other than what is scheduled and we can make arrangements to let you in.

Have a happy, healthy and safe summer.

Financial update

AMOUNT PLEDGED 29 WEEKS	\$31,958
AMOUNT RECEIVED 29 WEEKS	\$30,932
PLEDGED FOR 2007	\$57,100

Financial Secretary, Nancy H. Brown

Christian Education

Continued from previous page

Worship. A "guest" teacher (or ministry team) will read a story (or describe what their ministry team does.) Then the guest may stay to lead an activity or return to the adult service. Some kinds of hands-on activity will follow which embodies or expresses the topic for the day.

Teacher/Helper Appreciation Night:

On Wednesday, September 5th at 7:30PM (immediately following the 7PM prayer service) all Christian Education teachers and helpers are invited to enjoy delicious desserts and drinks and peruse the new curriculum for the upcoming year if they would like. The Christian Education Ministry Team offers this evening in sincere appreciation of all the teachers and helpers do to raise up our children with strong spiritualities and religious beliefs which support them across their lives.

Rally Day

The Rally Day service and celebration are scheduled for Sept. 9. The Rally Day service includes the commissioning of the teachers and helpers and the distribution of new bibles to children who are moving up to the next grade level in Sunday School. As is traditional, CEMT will sponsor "Make your own" ice cream sundaes after service. Traditional Sunday school lessons will resume Sept. 16. Questions? Contact Ronda Yeomans 508-877-7504 or Dallen Perkins: 978-779-6399.



Ministry Teams

Deacon Ministry Team
Ruth Carney, Chair
Joanne Larkins
George Tyne
Karolyne White

**deacons@
gracechurchucc.
org**

We are still in need of volunteers to usher, greet or to prepare and serve coffee for the fellowship time on Sunday after worship. (Thank you to those who have signed up.) Please consider volunteering some Sunday. Everyone who gathers at coffee hour enjoys the time and fellowship it provides.



Deacons

People of Grace,

At our last Deacons' meeting, we discussed having a Healing Service. The first one was on Wednesday, August 1 at 7:00 PM. If you couldn't make this one or didn't know about it, don't be upset. We will continue to have them on the first Wednesday of each month. So, come to the next one on September 5 at 7:00 PM. These services will be for everyone who seek healing whether for yourself or for someone else in your life. We all find strength in relationship with one another.

We had planned on New Members Classes beginning at the end of July. With everyone's summer schedules making this difficult, we have decided to postpone the classes for a few weeks. Those who have expressed an interest in participating will be contacted with the details. There is still time to be a part of the classes. If you are interested in joining Grace or just would like more information, please

contact Pastor Brad or one of the Deacons. Attending the classes does not commit you to join Grace, but will let you know what it means to be a member.

At our Deacon Ministry Team meetings, we talk about worship. Is there anything that touches you in worship? Concerns you? The Deacons thank you for the feedback we have received. We need you to continue to communicate with us! And we will discuss it and get back to you. Please let Pastor Brad or any of the Deacons know. We need both positive and negative feedback.

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

P. S. Have a great (and safe) summer!

Grace Updates

Housekeeping

Thanks to those of you who have pitched in and helped to clean the church building on occasion. It would be helpful, however, if everyone signed in on the available sheet, preferably when they plan to do it, or at least, when they have completed it. More helping hands would be greatly appreciated, of course, in order to be sure we have a clean building in which to worship each week. If we don't do this ourselves, it will be necessary to hire outside people to do it for us. (Keeping the budget in mind—let's not go there!) If you're not sure what needs to be done, check the instruction sheet posted inside the closet door next to the upstairs rest room.

About us:

Welcome back to Grace Kimball who has been unable to attend church for a while.

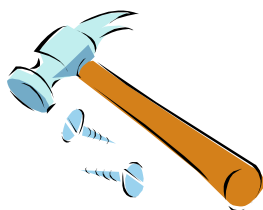
Prayers of support and sympathy to the families of George Sommer, Carl Sydow, and Martha French. All three of these long-time church members recently passed away.

My Dear Grace Church Family,
Thank you so much for your prayers, words of encouragement and support. Your caring means so much to me and is helping me through a difficult time.

*Blessings,
Ruth Carney*

Youth Mission Trip News

The Youth Ministry leadership team is currently Terri Taylor and Brad Watters. Any other adult who would like to explore participating in this ministry may contact either one.



Summer Lectio!

The women's Lectio group will have a summer gathering on Thursday, August 9th starting at 7:30. We will meet at the church (76 Salem End Rd). All are welcome to explore the art form of Lectio Divina to open up God's word to each of us. For further information contact Terri Taylor.

Our youth traveled with 50 others (and 14 adult leaders) from 5 other churches that are part of the Massachusetts Conference of the UCC to the Rocky Mount region of North Carolina, where folks are still recovering from the devastation wreaked in 1999 with Hurricane Floyd. The work involved putting up roof trusses and then sheathing the roof in the hot Carolina sun – the temperatures reached over 100 on the first day – as well as siding a shed and “stick-building” a roof for another shed. In addition to building new friendships and a sense of community, the youth developed vesper services, at first with some guidance from the leaders, and then on their own – and what wonderful spirit came through! We will be putting together a presentation to share with all of you in the fall.

Included in one of the services was this prayer written by one of the small groups. The name “accordion prayer” was developed by the kids to reflect the shape of the paper after the prayer was written. Each person adds a line, seeing only the one line written before it, then folds over the paper so that only their line shows before passing on to the next person:

We are your servants God, your hands on earth.

We pray to You as a unified people.

We ask You to help us work together.

We ask You to help those who have lost those things most important.

We ask You to remain by the sides of those in need of your guidance

And give us the strength to reach out to them.

We pray that we are strong enough to help And, with your support, strong enough to help ourselves

And help lead us down the path of Christ And You are wonderful God!

Please help us to find our spots and achieve our goals in life.

We ask You to support us through our time here and keep us safe.

We thank You for this opportunity to give back to others.

We thank God for our freedom and our opportunity to help others with their freedom.

Amen

A special thanks to Dan Dunbrack for filling in as our second leader for the trip. His experience and faith were greatly appreciated!

Youth Ministry Fund-raising

The wood cut-outs of 73 Union Ave are in. They are \$25 each, and there are extras for those who did not pre-order, but would still like one. The funds will help replenish the youth group funds to support further youth ministry activities. Thank you to all that have supported this ministry throughout the years.

Pew Bibles and Hymnals Available

Grace has a large number of “extra” hymnals and pew Bibles. If you would like a Bible or a hymnal for your home use, feel free to take one. However, do not take them from the bookcase (these are used on Sundays). Instead - there will be a stack of Bibles and hymnals in the fellowship hall throughout the month of August.



Summer Christmas:

Many exciting gifts were delivered to Pathways Shelter after the collection at the Eagles All-American Grille on July 25.

Thanks to those members of Grace that participated and also to the Eagles staff and patrons. Toys, diapers, "back-to-school" items, clothing, phone cards, paint sets, toilet articles, books and family games were all included and very much appreciated by the staff at Pathways. We have put smiles on many faces with this project which, in turn, should make all of us smile as well. Be sure to thank Mark & Karen when you have your next meal at the Eagles. Also thank them for welcoming us each month and making a monetary gift to us for having fun and good food as well!

If you haven't joined us yet, please mark August 26 on your calendar.

Grace Congregational Church, UCC

PO Box 1481 • 76 Salem End Road
Framingham, MA 01702
508-872-3342

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

Dianne Belloli
steward@gracechurchucc.org

Members at Large

Jean Burr
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

Websites:

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

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Organization
Postage PAID
Permit No. 28
Framingham, MASS.

Grace Church, UCC
PO Box 1481
Framingham, MA 01701