

GRACE NOTES

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

Summer Extravaganza at Grace Church

With that P.T. Barnum poster announcement spread through the three United Church of Christ churches in Framingham, nearly 80 people flocked to our large meadow for Season of Sharing Worship 2008, last Sunday. Weather threatened to be a factor. It had rained solidly earlier in the day. Then, the sun was out by 9:00 AM and the grass was tolerably dry by the time we started.

People (rumored to be “the ladies” but one or two of “the men” may have helped a bit) had been at work on Saturday and then Sunday morning to prepare our fellowship area to hold a lunch potluck. Mary Memmott and a bunch of kids had created a Treasure Hunt for after the worship service. Pastors from the three churches had been working to create a worship experience that would be energetic, dramatic, meaningful, and fun. Director of Music, Susan Minor, and some helpers had strung an electrical cord out to the manger (waiting patiently for Advent) so that she could energize her Yamaha synthesizer and provide music to the service. While many people brought lawn chairs, there were some chairs lugged out from our sanctuary and one or two blankets spread out too.

The worship service began with ringing bells and melody. Terri Taylor and Pastor Brad taught songs to the assembly. Each pastor offered a word on one of the images Jesus uses in the Gospel of Matthew to describe what the kingdom of God is like. Kids were involved in the service. During the worship, people moved their chairs to try to stay in the shade! It was a hot sun and a humid day. Singers led the congregation in an anthem during the offering. God must have loved it!

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August 2008

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Road Trip

Cathedral of the Pines August 17

We are going on a “field trip” on August 17 to the Cathedral of the Pines in Rindge, NH. We will worship at 10:00 AM at Grace and leave from Grace around 11:30 AM. We would like to make this an all church event, if possible.

“The Cathedral of the Pines is not (per se) a cathedral, a church, meeting house, temple or synagogue but rather a natural sanctuary accepting of all faiths. No one religion, faith, or spirituality is promoted here. However, peace and respect held fast by the precepts of Love Thy Neighbor and Love Thy God are imparted here.” – a direct quote from their brochure

Cathedral of the Pines has changed and grown over the years. Besides the initial worship space with the National Memorial, the “Altar of the Nations,” they offer many peaceful cathedral gardens: Patriotic Flagpole Garden, Bell Tower Container Garden, Museum Hosta Garden, St. Francis Chapel and Ten Commandment Garden, Mothers’ Chapel Garden, Remembrance Garden, and Zen Garden. There

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Dear Ones,

On Sunday, July 27, those of you who were in worship had the privilege of seeing a brief appearance by the elusive and illustrious Indiana Jones. While Professor Jones may have seemed to be making a point about something or other, it is possible that the connective narrative was swallowed by the excitement of the moment. That's how they do it in Hollywood. "Give 'em the old razzle-dazzle and razzle-dazzle 'em!" Well, I've done some excavating and here I am to bring you,

Indiana Jones and the Lost Ending

It seems that Indy had found a map in an old, dusty archive in Cairo. As usual, he was able to decipher enough of what it said to begin to solve its mysteries. He knew he could follow it to its hidden destination if he went from clue to clue. Donning his leather jacket and his trusty fedora, he set off on a journey of discovery.

Through the days of travel, he encountered modern day pirates, a 35-foot python, the mayor of New York City, and the entire Tanglewood festival orchestra. The clues led him to Framingham and they told him something else.

The clues he finally figured out told him that the treasure he was seeking would be amazing. The treasure would be astonishing. The treasure would hold the hope of changing the future forever in a very special way. Indy still wasn't sure what that special change might be but he could tell from the scribbles and ancient symbols that it would be a treasure of great value. Indy was so excited! He was also on the run.

He wasn't sure who it was that was pursuing him. Was it some evil organization? Was it some nemesis from a former adventure? Was it Father Time himself? Indiana Jones didn't know but he was running hard when he finally followed the clues to 76 Salem End Road.

Racing across the parking lot, he stumbled through a gathering of hundreds of local persons. It was some sort of revival, he guessed. Racing around, he found some allies to help him with the final decoding. Two astute young men were ready to help. They looked like the kind of boys who would be good at moving hundreds of

books, if they had to. Just what he needed! In his excitement, Indiana tore the precious map into shreds, much to the amazement of his assistants. Nonetheless, with a care and intelligence the three companions were able to piece it together again. Something about the way the pieces now went together gave Indiana the last parts of the puzzle. It told him that the treasure he sought would be spread out, in lawn chairs, on the very meadow on which he was now standing.

Yes! The treasure was a gathering of smiling people who were brought together by their love of each other, their love of their church, and their love of God. Indiana Jones found a great smile spreading across his movie star face! Here was a treasure of great worth! This feeling was so strong and pure; it must feel like this to see the kingdom of God!

Turning to the boys, he said, "In Matthew 18, Jesus told this story. 'The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which someone found and hid; then in joy the person goes and sells everything and buys that field.' These gathered people are a hidden treasure and we have found it. Let us shout for joy!"

*Peace and Blessing,
Pastor Brad*

Season of Sharing

Continued from page one

Lunch was interesting and even surprising, like a good potluck should be! People from Edwards and Plymouth toured our church building with kind curiosity. Most remarkable of all and quite different from the past two years, lots of people stayed around after the worship service. Clearly, sharing a meal kept us all there. Also, we were glad to be among a crowd of friends.

We can feel pleased, as a hostess feels when her guest has enjoyed good hospitality. We can give and accept thanks for all who pitched-in to set up the church, to clean up afterwards, to assist people with chairs and parking, to make the whole day work! Thank you one and all!

What shall we do next year?

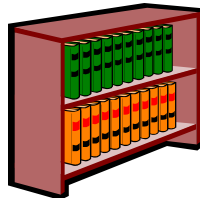
Pastor Brad

Fellowship/Library Task Team plans to spruce up church

The new Library/Fellowship Hall Task Team, which has met several times in the last few months, was charged with making the Fellowship area more welcoming and with converting one of the classrooms into a Library.

Team recommendations:

- **Library** - the team recommends that the upstairs corner room (beside the new parlor) be converted to a multiuse room (library, media and meeting room). There would be a table in the middle, two existing side chairs, and bookcases - as well as storage for any media equipment.



They also suggest that some of the more often-used children's books be kept in the classroom (versus the multiuse room) so that the youngsters will have easy access to their own books.

- **Fellowship area** - The team came up with a number of cosmetic changes for the Fellowship area. The small bulletin boards will be combined into one larger, neater bulletin board. There will be a meeting alcove with benches (with colorful cushions). The coat rack will be moved, artwork rearranged and so on. The extra chairs will be temporarily stored at the back of the sanctuary (until we have better shed storage).

- **Flooring in the Fellowship area** - this falls under the Stewards, who are currently installing a new tile floor.

- **Shed** - the team felt that we need a second shed for storage. We have checked and there is no issue around zoning. However, purchase of a new shed will hold until the Shed Task Team has had an opportunity to clean out the old shed (i.e., we'll see how much room is available).

Furniture Fund reminder

The renovations will involve spending money on some chairs, benches (with colorful cushions), bookcases and the storage shed for the yard. The team has agreed that donations of furniture are risky. So please - do not bring any furniture.

However, if you would like to donate to a fund to improve these two areas, it would be most appreciated. Thanks to those who have already donated.

Donations may be given to Nancy Brown or place your donation in the Sunday collection plate (write "Furniture Fund" on your check).

Your help will be most appreciated!

Team members: Nancy and Walter Brown, Jean Burr, Ruth and Frank Carney, Linda Hilliard, Jackie Mague, Evie and Al McGuirk, Leo Mogan

Church calendar - August

August 1	Stearns Farm pickup	August 18	10:30 AM	Bible Study
August 3	Cans for Communion	August 20	7:30 PM	Stewards meeting
	10:00 AM Worship			
	10:00 AM Sunday School	August 24	10:00 AM	Worship
August 4	10:30 AM Bible Study		10:00 AM	Summer Sunday
		School		
August 5	7:30 PM Central Council		11:00 AM	Gift Based Ministry forum
August 10	10:00 AM Worship	August 25	10:30 AM	Bible Study
August 11	10:30 AM Bible Study	August 27		Eat at Eagles
August 15	Stearns Farm pickup	August 29		Stearns Farm pickup
August 17	10:00 AM Worship	August 31	10:00 AM	Worship
	Trip to Cathedral of the Pines			

Ministry Teams

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

Save the Date
Sunday, Sept. 28
Walk to Prevent
Homelessness
12:30-3:00 p.m.
Framingham Centre
Common
Please mark your
calendars!

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

*stewards@
gracechurchucc.org*

This and That

Picnic Table sought



Christian Ed would like to have a picnic table for the children's play yard. Before we look into buying one, the congregaiton 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.

Mission

August Cans for Communion – August 3rd

This month we are looking for: SPAGHETTI SAUCE and PASTA. 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. And thank you to everyone who contributed to our recent "extra" collection of cereal. 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: Aug. 15th and Aug. 29th. 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 Sundays this month: August 17th and August 31st. 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 those Sundays – share with a neighbor and pass along a gift of Grace!



Stewards

New floor

As this issue goes to press, the down-stairs flooring, with the exception of the worship space, is being replaced. This has been a long time coming and we hope it will prove to be a big

improvement to our building. Work will also be done on the deck and hopefully it will not only look better but also be a better protection from the weather this fall and winter.

Increased expenses

All of us are finding it difficult today to live within our household budgets. Likewise, Grace is dealing with increased expenses and looking for ways to economize. If you are able, we urge you to keep your pledges current, reimburse us for the conference dues (\$17.40), make suggestions for how we can save money, and be involved in helping out wherever possible. Thank you for your support!

Deacon MT
Ruth Carney, Chair
George Tynes
Karolyne White

deacons@
gracechurchucc.
org

People of Grace,

Whatever your plans, wherever you travel – be safe and enjoy every moment! Don't forget to keep your church and church family in your prayers wherever you may be and those of us who will be at Grace will keep you in ours.

We had a wonderful **Season of Sharing** with our brothers and sisters from Plymouth and Edwards Churches on July 27th in our backyard! 76 people attended this wonderful joint service and enjoyed a marvelous summer potluck lunch provided by all three churches. Comments heard were: "What wonderful idea" "Thank you for hosting it here" "You have a great backyard for this" "Let's do it again." Thank you to one and all who made this possible. It was a truly uplifting and community experience for all.

On Sunday, August 17, we will have a field trip to the **Cathedral of**

the Pines in NH after worship. The deacons agreed to have this Sunday a "Casual Dress Sunday" for all. (Please see article on page one.)

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).

Our church is continuing to explore **Natural Church Development (NCD)** in and outside of worship. 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!

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 bookcase that holds the hymnals and Bibles.

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 Trip *Continued from page one*



is even a Cathedral Museum. All are open to the public.

While we are there (and not in any particular order), we will have a brief worship service, a picnic lunch, tour of the facility and time to explore. In addition to the regular greeters, we will have the availability of a guide to take us around and speak to the different aspects of the

Cathedral property.

This is all you need to do:

- Come to church dressed casually (It's even a "Casual Dress Sunday" at church), wear comfortable shoes, bring bug spray (just in case)
- Bring a picnic lunch
- Let Ruth Carney know you are coming and if you are driving and if you can take passengers (& how many) or if you need a ride (If you are riding with someone, a contribution to the driver to help with the gas would be appreciated.)

If you have friends or family who would like to join you on this "road trip," all are welcome!

Ruth Carney

Youth Happenings A confirmation year

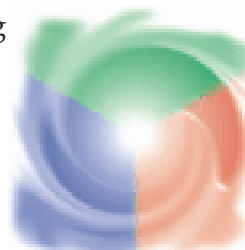
This year we are offering to all youth in grades 8 or higher an opportunity to explore their faith as candidates for confirmation. The confirmation program will provide opportunities for understanding the christian faith as well as learning of and experiencing other faith traditions such as Judaism, Islam, and Buddhism. There will be times of retreat, service and fellowship as well as a mission trip in June. Meetings will be approximately twice a month, starting with a family dinner in September to outline the program. Anyone interested in participating should contact Pastor Brad as soon as possible.

We are looking for additional adult leaders to help lead a discussion or a field trip. If you are interested in exploring this type of ministry opportunity, contact Pastor Brad or Terri Taylor.

Gift Based Ministry pilot continues this summer at Grace Church

More than 20 Grace Church members (including Central Council members) are participating in the Gift Based Ministry pilot program this summer. This involves reading a book, *The 3 Colors of Ministry*, and taking a gifts test that reveals our individual manifest and latent gifts.

There have been two Gift Based Ministry forums (one in June and another in July) with a third scheduled for Sunday, August 24.



Faith in Action



Over the past several months, we have been discussing ways in which we might help to make visitors feel more welcome at Grace Church and we are now excited to announce that we will soon have a "package" gift for this very purpose. Hopefully, everything will be ready within the next few weeks. One of the

items included in this gift is a Grace Church mug which will also be available to members and friends (for a modest price).

We don't call Faith in Action a "task team" because we don't want anyone thinking that we are all about work, meetings, etc. We are, however, a few people who enjoy getting together and brainstorming ways to show everyone that Grace Church cares about our community and then getting involved. We have fun doing this and invite any and all of you to speak to us to find out more.

Those who are currently part of FIA are Beverly Ablondi, Lynn Burdett, Jean Burr, Frank Carney, Linda Hilliard and Jeanne Otenti.

Grace Congregational Church, UCC

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Websites:

<http://www.gracechurchucc.org>

www.macucc.org (Mass Conf.)

www.ucc.org (UCC)



Summer reading for the Book Club is *Lilah* by Mark Halter