



GRACE NOTES

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

Grace Church Congregational Meeting Sunday, January 27 • 11:30 p.m.

A light lunch will be served and childcare provided.
The agenda for the meeting will include the 2008 budget.
A congregational call letter will be sent out in the next few weeks.

Missions and the Grace Budget

On January 27, the congregation will meet to approve a budget for 2008. The Missions Team is asking you to consider an increase to this part of the budget that more closely reflects the spirit of mission and giving of Grace Church.

We have requested a Missions budget that is a "tithe" (10%) of the total pledges received. This tithe would go to supporting the UCC through dues and the wider mission program, to our community through projects like the Walk to Prevent Homelessness and Stearns Farm, and out into the world at large through the continued support of Susan Oksens Frans, missionary in Indonesia.

None of these projects are new to Grace Church, but several had been cut from the budget as we faced the sale of Union Ave. As we settle into our new building we feel that it will only enrich us to share our budget as we have always shared our time and talents with the wider church and the Framingham community. Please speak to any member of the Missions Team if you have questions.

Ellie Crawford
Mary Memmott

Two events on January 6



Epiphany Sunday at Edwards Church

At 10 AM on Sunday, January 6, the congregations of Edwards, Plymouth and Grace will gather at Edwards Church for our annual combined service in celebration of Epiphany. We have a moving service planned which will include all the clergy and program staff of the three churches. The choir from the three congregations will join together. Remember, there is no worship at 76 Salem End Road on January 6 --please join us at Edwards Church in Saxonville at 10 AM.

Redevelopment Team meeting

A new Redevelopment Team will be launched in 2008. Anyone interested in participating in this team (or just learning what it's all about) is invited to join Pastor Brad for brunch at the Eagles in downtown Framingham -- beginning at noon on January 6. This is a dutch treat brunch (although the Eagles is both inexpensive- and bountiful).

Grace Notes

Volume 10, Number 1

January 2008

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Dear Ones,
Have you seen more of your neighbors lately?

If you live in or near Framingham, then you have been dealing with wintry weather. The ice and snow get some of us outdoors and shoveling. That might be where you see the woman across the street that you haven't seen since summer. When you do get out and into the supermarket, you can be sure that everyone you see has made it through the cold and the icy surfaces just like you. We need a good phrase to describe this potential camaraderie, this momentary unity, this casual connectivity brought about by shared struggle.

When I joined Grace Congregational United Church of Christ last spring and when my wife Debbie and I made our 2008 pledge a few weeks ago, I felt the vibrancy of commitment. The choice to commit to Grace Congregational, expressed through pledging, brings me satisfaction and expectation. I hope it is the same for you.

I did not sense very much connective camaraderie when writing out the pledge. In our New England congregational tradition, as it has evolved

• News from Tony Green

A recent e-mail from Tony told us that he keeps track of Grace through our web site. He said, "All of you helped get me grounded in my ministry, so I enjoy reading the newsletters. You weathered the storms of the past year and landed with "Grace". I love my ministry with Hospice. We have a partnership with a Hospice in South Africa. I was there for ten days.... What a wonderful and horrible place! Fortunately, there is a hospice for people with AIDS to get support and care to die with compassionate care ---- unfortunately, AIDS is still such a huge problem there. Hope to get a chance to tell you more about the trip sometime." Tony's son, Michael, is living with Ken, and applying to a music school in Florida. For those who may not have met Tony, he was a much-loved AIM student (Assistant in Ministry from Andover Newton) at Grace for several years before being ordained and moving to Saratoga Springs, N. Y.

anyway, we are leery of sharing financial information. We protect the confidentiality of our pledges so that it is not generally known whether, for example, Brad and Debbie submitted a pledge, how big the pledge was, etc. We tell the story of how Jesus observed a woman, who had little, put 2 coins in the offering (Luke 21.) He proclaimed it a great gift. Jesus valued her gift because she gave from what she had to live on rather than from her excess. We don't trust each other to be so kind and perceptive as Jesus in this story!

So, we go through our annual stewardship drive and accomplish that task. Thank you very much for participating!

And we still have more work to do to find the moments of connective camaraderie. We will work on projects together. We will go into the community to help where we can. We will reach out to people who are just one phone call away from coming to check us out. We will risk ourselves in some of these endeavors and, like neighbors all aching from shoveling snow, we will feel the pull of togetherness and shared struggle. We have chosen this path. It is a narrow, uphill, and most blessed path.

Looking forward to what comes next? I sure am!

*Peace and Blessing,
Pastor Brad*

Updates

- **The Holiday Fair brought in more than \$800. Well done!**
- **On November 10, we hosted the music workshop, "Opening the Gates." Drawing on rich and varied traditions of congregational singing, over 30 people engaged in theological study and music practice with Fiona Vidal-White. The feedback from participants was strong and specific. Registration fees covered nearly all of the expenses. Grace cooks and servers showed warm hospitality to the appreciative crowd.**
- **Inclement weather forced the cancelation of the Living Nativity on December 16 - as well as our Sunday morning service.**

A Year in Review: Grace Notes 2007 Headlines

Winter:

Christmas Eve Service held at 76 Salem End;
A special time for the Grace Church congregation
First Sunday service held at Salem End January 21
Grace Church settles into its new home!
All-church potluck and core values finale
GWU/Circle 13 hosts kitchen shower

Spring:

Treasures (no Trash) Sale held
Grace Church Open House and Celebration
features camaraderie (and chili cookoff)
Missions: Chalk Day a success

Summer:

Grace Church volunteers work at Stearns Farm
All ages are invited to "Camp Grace!"
Grace Church Pool Party draws more than 35

Fall:

Welcome Back! Rally Sunday is September 9
Faith in Action team reorganizes
Youth travel to North Carolina
We're Going Green!

Grace Church receives town's site plan approval
Fourth Annual Walk to Prevent Homelessness
Stewardship campaign: Why do you pledge?
Stearns harvests available on Sundays

Dedication Sunday:
A stellar event in the life of Grace Church

Opening the Gates:
Music & Inter-generational Worship on Nov. 10

Bring a bear to church

Missions hosts "Family Fun Day for the Earth"

Holiday Fair – our favorites from chowder to crafts

Living Nativity scheduled for Dec. 16 [snowed out]

On-going

Eating at Eagles once a month

Monday morning Bible Study

Book Club, Women's Lectio, Grace Women United
meet monthly

Men's Group reassembles

Wednesday's worship and healing services

Gift for Pathways and cooking for Turning Point

Kudos for the Buddy Program!

Cans for Communion continues

Church calendar - January

December 30	10:00 AM	Worship Cans for Communion	January 16	7:00 PM 7:30 PM	Worship Stewards
January 1	Happy New Year!		January 18	Turning Point Shelter meal	
January 2	7:00 PM	Healing Worship	January 20	8:30 AM 10:00 AM	Singer rehearsal Worship
January 6	10:00 AM 12:00 PM	Epiphany at Edwards Redevelopment Team brunch at Eagles	January 21	10:30 AM 7:00 PM	Bible Study Deacons
January 7	10:30 AM	Bible Study	January 23	Eat at Eagles! 10:00 AM 7:00 PM	Book Club Worship
January 8	7:30 PM	Central Council	January 27	8:30 AM 10:00 AM 11:30 AM	Singer rehearsal Worship Congregational meeting
January 9	11:30 7:00 PM	GWU soup lunch Worship	January 28	10:30 AM	Bible Study
January 13	8:30 AM 10:00 AM	Singer rehearsal Worship	January 30	7:00 PM	Worship
January 14	10:30 AM 7:30 PM	Bible Study Women's Lectio			

Ministry Teams

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 Eleanor Crawford,
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 Mary Memmott
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Christian Ed. MT
 Rob Lovewell
 Daleen Perkins
 Ronda Yeomans
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Mission

Post-Christmas Cans Collection – Dec. 30th

Please note: rather than collect cans on the first Sunday of January, we will make a 2nd December collection in the spirit of the holiday season. For this collection we are especially requesting: SPAGHETTI SAUCE and MAC AND CHEESE. Donations go to MetroWest Harvest Food Pantry in Framingham. Please contact Mary Memmott if you would like to help deliver our collection.

Warm Feet for Worcester – January Sock Drive



In the month of January, we are collecting NEW, men's, white athletic socks for the Worcester Fellowship, an outdoor church that serves the homeless. These are especially needed in the winter months. So bring socks for the journey of the Three Kings on Epiphany (Jan 6th joint service at Edwards Church), or bring them to church anytime in January. We are planning on

Christian Education

- **Nursery** Our wonderful child care person, Stacy Tuegal, is unable to cover the nursery through early January. Volunteers are needed to lend a hand if we have any infants or toddlers at church. Check with Linda Hilliard if you can cover nursery at short notice (i.e., would be willing to leave the service and go upstairs).



Grace Church T-shirts are now available.

- Youth sizes (sm, med, lg) \$8
- Adult sizes (sm, med, lg, xlg) \$10
- Adult size XXL \$12.

joining in Worcester Fellowship worship service on a Sunday afternoon in February when we deliver our collection. More details on that to follow.

Neighbors In Need (NIN)

“One Less” Campaign for Neighbors in Need – Collection Jan. 13

Were you able to do “one less” this holiday season? One less gift, one less dinner out, one less expensive coffee, or whatever you chose to cut back on? We will collect your “One Less” donations on Jan. 13 to benefit Neighbors in Need, the nation-wide UCC campaign that supports efforts in the U.S. for health care access, fighting homelessness and poverty, and supporting American Indian churches. Children can bring in their “One Less” Collection boxes on that date (or sooner). Adults are welcome to write checks to “Grace Church” and mark “Neighbors in Need” on the memo line or put your cash donation in a Neighbors in Need envelope (included with paper copies of this newsletter).

Youth Event

All Youth
 Event Jan
 6th, 6-8 pm
 The youth



group Christmas party was postponed due to weather on January 6th at 6:00. We will be ordering pizza and having a Yankees swap (maximum value of \$10) and doing some other stuff. The Shoe box ministry project is postponed to next December. All youth grades 6-12 are welcome - you can even bring a friend!

Peace and Blessings, Brad and Terri

Ministry Teams

Deacon MT
Ruth Carney, Chair
Joanne Larkins
George Tynes
Karolyne White

**deacons@
gracechurchucc.
org**

Stewards MT
Jean Burr, Chair
Lynn Burdett
Frank Carney
Judy Sebastian
Tim Taylor
**stewards@
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Deacons

People of Grace,

• On November 25, we had a wonderful "Blue Jean Sunday and Greening of the Church." Thank you to all who took part. We accomplished a lot and had fun doing it. You are now invited to another one on January 13 – "Blue Jean Sunday and De-Greening of the Church." Please wear comfortable clothes to church, bring a bag lunch and stay to un-decorated the church and put all those Advent and Christmas items away. There will be something for everyone to do, no matter what your age or physical abilities. Beverages and dessert provided.

• Our journey through Advent and Christmas was wonderful in some ways and disappointing in others with the weather not co-operating. Thank you to all who participated in all the events in December whether it was

Stewards

• Kudos to Al McGuirk—The next stormy day, if you find shelter under the deck, make a mental note to say thank you to Al. As a gift to us, he has provided and installed tarpaper and an outdoor rug on the floor above. Yea, Al!

• The Stewards are nearly ready to make a "Building Policy & Procedure" booklet available to all who may have questions about the building usage. We invite all to make use of the information and offer suggestions for additions.

• Effective January 27, the date of the congregational meeting, our alarm system will be activated. This means that all key holders should be totally familiar with the system before that date. Tim Taylor will be available to review the procedures with each so check with him for a good time to do this.

Advent Candle lighting, the Church Christmas Fair, preparing for the Live Nativity (which got cancelled), etc. As hard as it is to not have worship on a Sunday especially during Advent, we did not want to take the risk of someone getting hurt (or stuck). We did find that cancelling worship on December 16th was easier with our listing on Channel 5. So, if we need to cancel worship again for weather related reasons, tune to Channel 5 for our listing.

• We have many things going on at our church in January! Please see separate article for the Sunday events.

• We continue to have a mid-week worship service every Wednesday at 7:00 PM. On the first Wednesday of each month, the service is a Healing Service. These Healing Services are for everyone who seeks healing whether for yourself or for someone else in your life. Healing can be in mind, spirit and/or body. We all find strength in relationship with one another.

• We are still in need of volunteers to be a lay reader, usher, greet or to prepare and serve coffee for the fellowship time on Sunday after worship. (Thank you to those who have signed up or just pitched in.) Please consider volunteering some Sunday. Everyone who gathers at coffee hour enjoys the time and fellowship it provides. You may find the sign-up board on top of 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*

Grace Church's 1873 Covenant

- Grace Women United will meet January 9 (Wednesday) at 11:30 AM at church. This is our annual soup luncheon (weather permitting) If cancelled we will have it in February. Call **Lynn Burdett** (508-872-7863) or **Jean Burr** (508-872-1082) for further information.

- The Book Club will meet Wednesday, January 23 at 10AM at church. The book to be discussed is *The Faith Club* by Ranya Idliby, Suzzane Oliver and Priscilla Warner It's about 3 women, a Muslim, a Christian and a Jew who are searching for understanding of each others faith. Please join us for a lively discussion.

- **Laura Buck** has volunteered to edit the February *Grace Notes*. Thanks, Laura! All copy will be due to her by January 21.

- **Buddy Program:** We still need someone to coordinate the buddy program between church members and out shut-ins. If you can help, please speak to pastor Brad.

- Our prayers are with **Leo Morgan** as he recuperates from a fall.

In Case of Cancellation
As winter approaches and the weather turns on us, we are again connected to **WCVB, Channel 5**. If a service or event needs to be cancelled because of weather, tune to **Channel 5** for our cancellation listing.



At the November GWU meeting, Historian Grace Kimball read form a copy of Grace's original covenant form 1873.

Original Covenant - 1873

In the presence of God and this assembly, we do solemnly avow the Lord Jehovah, Father, Son and Holy Ghost to be our God and our portion forever. We do solemnly devote all our faculties, powers, and possessions to the service and glory of our Maker, covenanting that we will be the Lord's forever, engaging that through the aid of the Spirit, we will cleave to him as our chief good, that we will love him supremely and obey him faithfully; that we will give diligent attendance to his word and ordinances, that we will seek above all things the honor and interest of his kingdom, and that we will aim without ceasing to adorn our profession by a blameless life and by holiness of heart.

We do also now cordially join ourselves to the church of Christ and engage to submit to the regular administration of its government and discipline to strive earnestly for its peace, edification and purity, and to walk with its members in Christian faithfulness, fellowship and love.

Trusting in the grace of God, we thus covenant and engage.

Grace Congregational Church, UCC

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