

GRACE NOTES

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

June 13th: Combined Worship Service and Meeting

By Linda Dunbrack

On Pentecost, we substituted the words “I see you” for “Peace be with you” in the passing of the peace. It was a seemingly small change, but in many ways was a metaphor for the journey we have been on as a church. We had to move from “Listen to me” to “I see you.”

In that regard, the congregational conversations that were held on May 16 and May 23 were simply amazing. Great seeds of wisdom came from unexpected places, including and especially our children, and the congregation recognized them as treasures. Some individuals took personal risks that required enormous trust in everyone in the room, and people responded with love and kindness, rather than judgment. To me, it truly seemed as if the Holy Spirit was among us.

In particular, I saw three signs of hope that I would especially like to celebrate:

1. The significant progress of our church as shown by the Natural

Church Development follow-up survey;

2. The collective sense that Grace Congregational United Church of Christ continues to have a unique and valuable contribution to make as part of the Framingham community; and

3. The willingness to move ahead as a congregation and be flexible in how we might look at that.

On June 13, we plan to covenant as a community about the way ahead . . .

In January 2010, we made a decision to form a task team to look at 3 scenarios as a church: build, remain the same, or close. The Research and Discovery Team members put forth significant effort to put together information, consider the possibilities, and develop a framework for our conversations. I’d like to thank them for all of their work.

In May 2010, it seems clear that, as a community, we have no enthusiasm for closing the doors of the church at this time. What is less clear is exactly the path we wish to take to do that.

Rather than simply looking at “Build” and “Remain” as clear-cut choices, my sense is that we need to answer this larger question: What are our best possible options for improving and enlarging our space to better meet our needs as a worshipping community, support our ongoing mission and ministries in the community, and be warm and welcoming to those who enter our doors? We need to look at several possible options and consider investing in professional opinions in interior design and architecture.

Most of all, we need to trust that God will follow us, regardless, and lead us along the path, if we ask. How do we invite God into our planning process? At our congregational meeting on June 13, we plan to covenant as a community about the way ahead and ask for God’s blessing and guidance as we move ahead. With this in mind, the meeting will be combined with worship on that day.

How is that going to work? The details are being worked out, but fortunately, others have been trailblazers in this regard, so we have models on which to base the service. Come with open minds, open hearts, and open spirits as we celebrate our commitment to move ahead.

Grace Notes Volume 12, Number 6

June 2010

| | | | |
|---------------------------|---|---------------------|---|
| • Pastor’s Note..... | 2 | • Missions..... | 4 |
| • R&D clarification | 2 | • Stewards..... | 4 |
| • Church Calendar..... | 3 | • Deacons..... | 5 |
| • FIA Update | 3 | • Christian Ed..... | 5 |
| • Stone Soup..... | 3 | • Amazon trip..... | 6 |

Dear Ones,

Jesus did many other things as well. If every one of them were written down, I suppose that even the whole world would not have room for the books that would be written.

-- John 21:25

I'd like to read your book.

What book you say? You haven't written any book? What are you talking about Brad!

Okay, maybe you haven't written your book yet. So let's imagine together. I imagine a book in which you tell the story of something, or all the things, that changed your life.

Now, it is in the ongoing texture of our lives where we do most of our living. And much of our lives is repetitive stuff like brushing our teeth and doing the laundry. In the right hands, that could make for interesting reading. It may also be true that the way you do all those repetitive things is peculiarly fascinating. (Maybe that's what the writers of the Gospel of John had in mind about Jesus? No, probably not.) I also know that there are one-of-a-kind moments, brief periods in which it is clear, perhaps only afterwards, that we are on a new path going a different direction from before.

Was it something you heard? Maybe it was someone you met. It could be something you did or something that happened to you. It might have been something that turned out well. It might have been bad.

The book might have to include the things you did in a moment of taking a wrong turn. Even though you've done

a lot in your life to balance it out, seek forgiveness, or forgive yourself, you still wounded someone and that wounds you back and the wound won't heal fully. You've worked to "let it go" but you can't completely let it go. Sin is sticky.

The book might also contain the moment you first heard Chopin or got lost in Mahler. The best tomato, best beer, best pizza, or best Boston Crème Pie might make you list. There might be that time when you first caught a glimpse of Jesus that changed you from one who had heard about him to one who has seen him. It might be the moment that you came to un-

derstand the poet's phrase about "seeing the world in a grain of sand." There is some good news. Grace is also sticky.

Those who wrote the Gospel of John left us amazed with the power and complexity that might be revealed if we knew everything about Jesus and his life! Jesus was unique and a special case, perhaps. Well, you are too in your own amazing way. What story can you share about your unique and special life? Sin and Grace both make for pretty good reading. I'd like to read that book.

Peace and Blessing,
Brad

Research and Discovery Team Clarification

The R&D team was assembled to address the following motion, which was approved at the January 31 Congregational meeting.

We move that a team be formed to research and develop scenarios for the future of Grace Church. These scenarios will include:

1. Building additional space
2. Remaining in our current situation
3. Closing Grace Church
4. Other

The Research and Discovery presentations this spring were engaging and full of conversation. We want to make sure that everyone understands the meaning of each section of the original motion and how the R&D team defined each scenario.

- **Building Additional Space:** this option refers to any aspect of construction at Salem End Road - this includes any option from expansion of the current worship space through renovation of various rooms to significant new construction.
- **Remaining in Our Current Situation:** this option means the church we are today is the church we want to remain (note: this is in regard to space and does not include any redevelopment changes).
- **Closing Graced Church:** this means Grace closes its doors forever and liquidates its assets.

Save the Date Friday, July 9 "Stone Soup" and Movie Night

Sponsored by the Earth-Care Education Group from Grace and Edwards Church. Join us for a light dinner -- soup with fresh veggies from Stearns Farm -- and a "heavy" movie -- "Food, Inc." Alternate choice for the kids. Dinner at 6 p.m., movie at 7, here at Grace. More details to come later in June --- see you there!

Women's Lectio Potluck Thursday June 10

We are switching things up a bit as the program year comes to close. We will gather on Thursday evening June 10th starting at 7 pm to share a meal and explore scripture using the ancient art of Lectio Divina. All are welcome to join us, if you are familiar with Lectio Divina or if this is the first time you have heard of it. Come and join the circle of fellowship and spirit. We meet at Grace, 76 Salem End Road.

Grace Women United

GWU will not meet on June 9th, We will be gathering on June 23 (Wednesday) at Nicholas Restaurant in Natick at 11:45AM to enjoy lunch. This will be our last meeting until September.

Faith in Action

By Jean Burr

- Rumor has it that we can begin to look forward to a return of the Not Ready for Anytime Players in the fall. Keep watching for details because no one wants to miss out on being part of the production in one way or another. There are lots of chances to perform, help out in other ways, or sit in the audience and prepare to be entertained!
- July 24 has already been announced as the next Styrofoam collection day at Grace. Please spread the word to your friends and neighbors and be sure the date is on your calendar! Our church is now known throughout the area for the "one that collects Styrofoam"! Let's make this one even bigger and better than the last one!



- Please remember that June 13, the day of our important church meeting, is also the day when you can make a statement to us all simply by the shirt you choose to wear. Are you a big fan of fishing? Do you have a "thing" for some celebrity? Are you a staunch supporter of a cause to cure something? Do you believe in something or someone so strongly that you want everyone to know about it? Whatever you feel strongly about, let us know by the message on your t-shirt!

Calendar - June

| | | |
|---------|-------------------------------------|---|
| June 5 | 8:00 AM | Men's Group |
| June 6 | 8:45 AM 10:00 AM | Singers Intergenerational services/communion |
| June 10 | 7:00 PM | Lectio Potluck |
| June 12 | | Boston Pride March |
| June 13 | T-shirt Day 8:45 AM 10:00 AM | Singers Intergenerational services/communion |
| June 16 | 7:30 PM | Stewards |
| June 19 | | Mass Conference UCC Annual Meeting |
| June 20 | Father's Day 8:45 AM 10:00 AM | Singers Worship |
| June 23 | 11:45 AM 5:30 PM | GWU luncheon Eagles dinner |
| June 27 | 8:45 AM 10:00 AM 10:00 AM | Singers Worship Camp Grace |

Missions

By Mary Memmott

June Cans for Communion – June 6th

Please bring CANNED FRUIT and FRUIT JUICE. The Framingham "Hope" Food Pantry continues to see a great need for food in our community. Please remember that expired, damaged or unlabeled cans cannot be safely donated. All are welcome to sign up on the bulletin board to help deliver our monthly collection on a Saturday morning – see Mary Memmott with any questions.

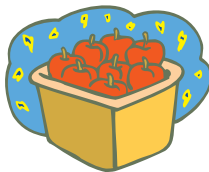
Could you be a "Farm to Food Bank" Volunteer?

Grace Church has partnered with Stearns Farm and the Framingham "Hope" Food Pantry to provide a share of

fresh fruits and vegetables to the pantry throughout the harvest season.

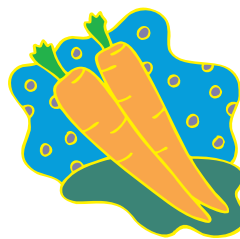
This helps pantry clients supplement canned and dried goods with fresh food as much as possible.

Farm-to-Food Bank Volunteers need to be available on a Friday afternoon (anytime between 2-7 p.m.) to pick up fresh produce at Stearns Farm (Edmonds Road in Framingham). This involves weighing and bagging produce, and sometimes some light "pick-your-own." The process takes about 1 hour. Produce is bagged, labeled, and stored in a cooler that is then delivered by the volunteer to the pantry (Irving St., Framingham) the next morning (Saturday) at 9 a.m.



for distribution during pantry hours. If you are not available to bring the food to the pantry on Saturday drop-off on Friday can sometimes be arranged.

We are looking for volunteers every Friday from June 11 to mid-October. Volunteers always take home a sample of



fresh herbs, flowers, and their favorite fruit or vegetable --some berries just have to eaten that day!

For more information see Mary Memmott or talk to Linda Hilliard, Ellie Crawford, Terri Taylor, or Ronda Yeomans -- all past volunteers. See you at the farm!

Stewards

By Jean Burr

BPW Update

We are in communication with the Framingham Board of Public Works concerning some problems stemming from the sewer project last year. They have agreed that some areas of the property need additional loam and regrading. Although we expect repairs will be done during the week, children should be cautioned to avoid any holes or piles of dirt until all the work has been completed. Stewards are looking into "going green" when purchasing supplies. Anyone with experience or

suggestions along this line are encouraged to be in touch with any one of us.

Expenses

During the summer months, we sometimes forget that church expenses go on as usual and this can have a negative effect on our cash flow. Therefore, it will be much appreciated if we all keep our pledge payments current. We wish for all of you who will be spending the coming months away from Framingham and Grace, a happy and relaxing summer. If you have an extra postcard, let us hear from you!



They're Back!

Have you been craving an evening of fun, food and fellowship?
Have you been dreaming of being someone else for just a little while?
Then, **THEY'RE BACK!**
The Not Ready for Anytime Players will be hosting another Mystery Dinner Theater in the Fall. If you are willing to be a player, work behind the scenes or help with dinner, please let Daleen Perkins know.

Deacons

By Ruth Carney

People of Grace,
walk unafraid

"Dark as my path may seem to others, I carry a magic light in my heart. Faith, the spiritual strong searchlight, illumines the way, and although sinister doubts lurk in the shadow, I walk unafraid toward the enchanted wood where the foliage is always green, where joy abides ... in the presence of the Lord."

—Helen Keller

We have been having many, many conversations in meetings (formal and informal) and after worship on Sundays. We are listening to each other, we are talking to each other. We are putting into practice our accepting community. We have decisions to make about our future, some will be easy, some will be hard. Some of us (hopefully all) will continue the journey together wherever it leads us while some will forge new paths. Please continue to keep our faith community in your prayers and be open to wherever God wants us to go. Let us "walk unafraid toward the enchanted wood where the foliage is always green, where joy abides ... in the presence of the Lord." Amen.

Sundays in June:

- Pastor Brad will be away Sunday, June 6th, and we will welcome back the Reverend Larry Iannetti as our guest preacher for our intergenerational service.
- Worship with Congregational Meeting on June 13th
- Father's Day – June 20th.

If you would like to provide flowers for the altar, please be

in touch with Ruth Carney. You may bring flowers or if you wish to have her order flowers from our florist, the current price is \$35.00.

Please do not forget that we care about your wellbeing, if we can be of any help, please be in touch

with one of us. God is with us and among us. God does and will provide. May you always feel God's blessings,

Deacons
Ruth Carney
Karolyne White

Christian Education

By Mary Memmott

Sunday School – Transition to Summer and "Camp Grace"

Thank you to all the Christian Education teachers and helpers who shared their gifts with our children this year. Your time and talents have made such a difference. The Christian Ed school year will end with a celebration for all the children during Sunday school on June 13th.

Camp Grace Summer Sunday School will begin on June 27th. Our theme this summer will be "All God's Creatures" – animals in Bible stories, in nature, and in our lives. Mary Memmott will serve as Sunday school superintendent for the summer – please contact her if you would like to teach, help, or share your talents with the children this summer. With an animal theme we may need visits from friendly pets or those who can speak about them – could that be you? Musical talent is always welcome as well – does anyone have a good animal-themed-Bible-camp song to share?



Below is the upcoming summer schedule for families:

- June 6 – no Sunday school, intergenerational worship
- June 13 – Sunday school celebration during worship time
- June 20 – no Sunday school, intergenerational worship for Father's Day
- June 27 – "Camp Grace" Sunday school for all ages. Children especially invited to attend to help us plan the rest of "Camp Grace." Discuss a possible fundraiser for the ASPCA.
- July 4 – no Sunday school, Season of sharing
- July 11 – "Camp Grace" Sunday school for all ages.
- July 18 -- "Camp Grace" Sunday school for all ages
- July 25 -- "Camp Grace" Sunday school for all ages.
- Aug. 1 – "Camp Grace" Sunday school wrap-up!

During the rest of August, families should plan on intergenerational worship at Grace. We may add Sunday school dates Aug. 22 and 29 depending on interest – updates later this summer!

Heard at Church

"God is going to follow us where ever we go."

Richard Whitmore

"I think we are the Faith In Action Church – living our faith by doing what we can for others."

Jean Burr

Back to the Amazon

Note: Linda Hilliard's daughter, Dorothy McGrath, is returning to the Amazon River in Peru to work with the Amazon Promise medical team.

Dorothy writes:

Last year I was given the great honor and pleasure of accompanying Amazon Promise on an amazing medical expedition into the heart of the Amazon jungle. I learned a great deal about compassion, kindness, and the strength of the human spirit from all of those whose lives we touched and all those who worked alongside me.

The men and women, and children of the villages, will live in my heart forever. Their kindness and appreciation for what we often take for granted: medical care, knowledge of basic health teachings, and supplies, filled my heart with compassion for these wonderful people. When you see the limited resources these people have, you really begin to appreciate how we live in such an affluent accessible society.

Upon leaving Peru there was never a question of will I return; it was a question of when will I return. I am pleased to say that I will again have the opportunity to join this amazing organization in October.

On this two week expedition into the remote jungle of Peru, I look forward to providing desperately needed medicine, education, and training to the villagers.

To make this trip possible, I again humbly ask for your help. The fees for such an expedition are costly. Donations assist with travel expenses (all volunteers pay their own way) and the purchase of much needed medical supplies. Your generosity last year enabled me to bring antibiotics and other medical necessities to further our care capabilities.

Thank you in advance for your support! If you have any questions or comments, please do not hesitate to contact me.

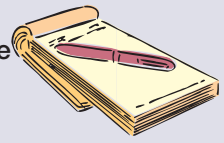
Note: Although Dorothy would appreciate cash donations, she is also looking for the following donations:

- Old prescription glasses
- Vitamins/Tylenol/Motrin/Antibiotic Ointment/steroid creams etc.
- T-shirts – all sizes

You may contact Linda at church or Dorothy McGrath, 179 Elm Street, Amesbury, MA 01913 (978)388-5223
dorothybrighton@hotmail.com

Essays About Grace

Tell us what it is about Grace Church that feeds you,



why have you stayed with our church, what makes you proud of Grace Church and its members? When you speak of Grace to others, what do you say?

Send essays to Jean Burr or Linda Hilliard.

Grace Congregational, UCC

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