

GRACE NOTES

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

Larger Space Project Update

As June begins, the Larger Space Project (feasibility and design) will grow visibly active.

The architect, Graham Ruggie, and his team have been working with maps of our site, town regulations, etc. to complete the first deliverable of this spring-and-summer project. The first deliverable is what they call a "build out analysis." This report will be a summary and conclusions about what kinds of construction and what size of construction will be even possible for 76 Salem End Road.

Having heard some past analyses of these matters and remembering some of our corporate experience, we all probably have some idea of the conclusions. We know we have to be careful about the watershed issues of wetlands, floodplain, and wildlife range. We know we can't build over the high-pressure sewer line that runs through our property. We know about setbacks from the public roadways and we observe that the character of "our side of the tracks" is residential.

It will be interesting to settle these kinds of limitations into the firm distances and square feet of solid possibilities, don't you agree? Look for the report to be shared with the congregation as soon as the architect team delivers it!

- Pastor Brad

June 5: Congregational Conversation

Please plan to attend our June 5 Congregational Conversation. Our topic list is building so if there's something you'd like us to discuss, please send your suggestion to Pastor Brad or give him a call at 508-380-7733.

We will convene our discussion at or near 11:30 AM, following our intentionally intergenerational worship service with communion and some fellowship time around the coffee urns. We will provide something to eat and child care. However, consider that our kids are explicitly invited to participate in these conversations and, as in the past, our format will include some small group conversa-

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Congregational Meeting is June 12

May 30 Letter from Moderator Linda Dunbrack

Dear Members:

It's about to be June and I'm sure you are anticipating the beginning of summer and our June Annual Meeting. You are hereby called!

I will convene our June Annual Congregational Meeting on Sunday, June 12, 2011 immediately following the worship service at approximately 11:15 A.M. We will arrange for child care for those kids not attending the meeting and we will provide a light lunch.

The June Annual Meeting is a business meeting of the church. While there will be room for the normal discussion that accompanies the business of the church, I'm planning the meeting so that we conclude our business rather swiftly. During June, you can expect invitations to other congregational conversations where we will explore topics such as "Taking Stock: Where are we now?" at which time we will plan for a more freely ranging conversation.

Our Agenda is as follows:

1. Leadership team: Nominations, roles and responsibilities
2. Renewal of Pastor's contract
3. Clerk: Nomination
4. Commitment Statement 2011

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From the Pastor

Dear Ones,

...therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from which he was taken.

- Genesis 3:23

The first trip humans take in the Bible is a fateful one. It is set in the context of the second of the several creation stories one finds in the Bible. The trip out of Eden separates Adam and Eve from the presence of God. It is the primary (i.e., the first and also the most important) illustration of the costs of sin. Text and tradition describe the sin as Adam and Eve's disobedience. Yes, and I would like to offer you an additional insight. In this story, sin constitutes acting outside of the relationship on a matter that is important to the other one in the relationship.

Think about that for a moment.

It's the moment when, in a marriage, husband shows up with a bright red Corvette ZR1 3ZR, having traded in the minivan and committed to a payment plan to cover an MSRP over \$120,000. "It just spoke to me." Or you show up to have supper with two friend and your friends have also invited a date for you. Or Mom and Dad put their

heads together and agree to have an exchange student from Kyrgyzstan move in for a year and share your room.

Do you think it is an accident that Dad, your friends, or your parents made those decisions without consulting you? Of course not. One party in a relationship has acted outside of the relationship on a matter that is important to, in this case, you. They couldn't check with you first? Adam and Eve couldn't have picked up the phone to check with God?

"Hi! It's me! ... No, nothing much. I was just talking to serpent. ... Oh. ... Gee, serpent speaks well of you. Anyway, we were talking about that tree you told Adam '...of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat.' So I asked Adam and we just wanted to check how important that is to you, 'cause the fruit looks like it wouldn't hurt a flea!"

Regardless of how the person intended the act, it feels to you like an assault. It is true that what the other person intended means something. Benign intentions may make it possible for you to forget (forgive?) the act. It may make it easier for you to go along with the new plan. This is particularly true if the relationship is deep and strong.

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Calendar - June

June 4	8:00 AM 9:00 AM	Men's Group YARD CLEAN UP	10:00 AM	Intergenerational Worship*
June 5	CANS FOR COMMUNION 9:00 AM 10:00 AM 11:30 AM	Singers Intergenerational Worship* CONGO CONVERSATION	June 21	7:30 PM Stewards meet
June 8	11:30 AM	GWU meeting	June 26	9:00 AM 10:00 AM 10:00 AM
				Singers Worship (Guest Preacher) Camp Grace
June 11	9:45 AM	STEARNS FARM WORKDAY	In July:	
June 12	CANS FOR COMMUNION PENTECOST SUNDAY 9:00 AM 10:00 AM 11:30 AM	Singers Intergenerational Worship* CONGREGATIONAL MTG. <i>Children: Birthday of the Church Party</i>	July 3	Lay led Service
			July 10	Joint service (Edwards and Plymouth)
June 15	11:30 PM	Grace Women United luncheon	CAMP GRACE:	June 26, July 17, July 24, August 14, August 21
June 19	9:00 AM	Singers		* Children leave for Sunday School after the passing of the peace
			Office Hours:	Wednesdays/Thursdays 9:00 AM - 1:00 PM

Shape of Ministry Update

The Shape of Ministry at Grace Team has completed their performance review for Pastor Brad. Job evaluations surveys were sent to 36 active church members and 29 were returned; an excellent response rate of 76 percent. Thanks to all who responded to this survey. At the same time, Pastor Brad filled out an extensive self evaluation.

The numeric responses and comments were tabulated (without names) and the original job evaluation forms were destroyed. The Shape team met first with the Leadership team and then with Pastor Brad to discuss the findings. Overall Brad received high rankings: above average and exceptional in most categories.

There were a few growth areas and the Shape team - in concert with Leadership - is working with Brad on action plans for the coming year.

Meanwhile, the team has made a recommendation to Leadership that Pastor Brad's contract be extended for another year - to July 2012.

Since the survey content was kept anonymous, those who participated will not receive any personal responses. However, it should be noted that Pastor Brad welcomes and encourages direct feedback. Feel free to talk to him at any time about any celebrations or concerns.

Linda Hilliard

Congregational Meeting

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5. Financial Report
6. Acceptance of Annual Report
7. Larger Space Team Update

Please make every effort to attend worship and the congregational meeting on June 12. Be a part of the future of Grace Church.

June 5 Meeting

Continued from page one

tions as well as some topics that need to be shared in a whole group setting.

One topic we'd like to consider is our redevelopment. Where are we on the path of redevelopment? What's next? This will include some framing presentation and then conversation.

*- Pastor Brad on behalf
of the Leadership Ministry Team*

Stewards

Join Yard Cleanup Day!

The clean-up day which was scheduled for early May did not actually happen. That doesn't mean that it isn't needed, however, so we will try again on Saturday, June 4. Please help us with the cleaning, sweeping, weeding, etc. of our yard and gardens on that day anytime from 9:00 a.m. on. Work will begin in earnest when the men's group breaks at about 10. We will have a list of chores as well as some tools available, but all are encouraged to bring favorite equipment and, of course, work gloves! If you have suggestions for overlooked tasks, please let us know!



Jean Burr

Partial task list from Pastor Brad

Clean/paint(?) front entrance to church

Turn over the chips in playground. Should we add to them?

Clean up in back of the shed, dispose of junk.

Check status of light fixture in back next to exit door from sanctuary

Sand & refinish play yard equipment.

Spray poison ivy

Pull up maple trees which are sprouting up around edges of property

Put up second bat house. (Is the one which is up too low?)

Plant annuals in barrel.

Repair shed so planters can be put up and filled.

Rake/clean up area at entrance near & under the GC sign.

We have lots of black landscape cloth. Do we want to order some chips and attempt to make the front look better? Should I purchase some annuals for the barrel & window boxes, or does anyone else have some they plan to bring?

Deacons

People of Grace,

Have you ever asked this question: What is Pentecost- how can it relate to me?

The birth of the church

Fifty days after the Resurrection, the first Christians, most of them Jews, gathered to celebrate the Jewish harvest festival known as Pentecost.

At that gathering something happened that was so awesome and indescribable that when writing about it, St. Luke could only use metaphors. A sound like the rush of a violent wind seemed to fill the entire house where they were meeting. Something like tongues of fire appeared among them — a tongue rested on each of them.

It was then that they “were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability”

(Acts 2:4, NRSV). The crowd that gathered outside was amazed and perplexed. They wanted to know what it meant. Some observers thought it was a gathering of drunks.

But Peter interpreted it all correctly to anyone who would listen. He told of Christ, his life, his mission, his death and his Resurrection. Most importantly, Peter explained that God had made Jesus both Lord and Messiah. The proof of that was the Resurrection.

Three thousand people were so moved by Peter’s words that they were baptized that day and “devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers” (Acts 2:42, NRSV).

The Christian Church was born that day.

A hint of Pentecost – sometimes

the story in Acts 2 is hard to understand, but hearing it in the family story below it begins to make sense

Rev. Stephanie Bekhor of Arizona tells about family gatherings in her grandparents’ home. Her paternal grandmother had Iranian roots and spoke Farsi, Arabic, French and English. Her grandfather knew Hebrew, read from the Hebrew Old Testament and then led prayers in that language. Her Uncle Ed spoke Arabic and Farsi interchangeably. His wife spoke English but could grasp the essence of what others were communicating. Her Aunt Louise told jokes in French. Few of them understood French, but everyone laughed at the punch lines. Her demeanor gave them away. Only Stephanie understood Spanish, but when she offered a toast in Spanish, everyone understood her joy and good wishes. The family smiled and clinked their glasses together.

Despite the various languages being spoken, the family members basically understood one another. Why? Because of their love, intimacy and connectedness with one another.

In a Pentecost sermon, Rev. Bekhor recalled those joyous family gatherings. She concluded that when her family gathered in the presence of God, there was some similarity to what happened on the day of Pentecost. Those ancient believers also, “began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability” (Acts 2:4 NRSV). And even visiting foreigners understood the essence of what was said. The foreigners

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Faith in Action



- There were 10 of us who joined together for **Brunch/Lunch** following worship on the 22nd of May. We went to the Trackside Grille in Ashland and were all very pleased with the food, fellowship, staff, prices & surroundings. (What more could we ask for?) Because of the busy Sundays in June, we are not planning another outing until sometime

later on this summer. Hopefully, there will be suggestions forthcoming for where and when!

- Thank you to all who donated to, worked on, or bought from the **Yard Sale** on the 14th of May. A rather disappointing \$600 was realized, half of which has gone to the Metrowest Outreach Council for their program to prevent homelessness. The other half has been added to the larger space fund. Although we had hoped for a larger response to the sale, those who did come left with some real bargains.
- There will be information in the annual report about the success of our **Styrofoam Collection Days**. We urge you to read that and, of course, put the next date on your calendar---July 23.

Jean Burr

Deacons (continued)

listened when Peter told the story of Christ. They were so moved by the truth of his witness, plus the infectious enthusiasm they were seeing among the gathered believers, that many joined the Christian movement immediately. Some 3,000 people became Christians on that marvelous occasion. It was the birth day of the Church.

Pastor Stephanie's family gathered together, speaking various languages, yet they communicated the reality of God's love. It's no wonder she felt that she had experienced a hint of what Pentecost was like long ago.

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June will soon be with us with something happening each Sunday. We will be having Congregational Conversations, Congregational Meeting and special Sundays.

Sunday, June 12, is Pentecost and we will celebrate the birthday of the Christian church. The liturgical color of the day is red. So please wear something red in celebration, a scarf, tie, pin, shirt or blouse, or a whole outfit!

Sunday, June 19, is Father's Day.

Sunday, June 26, we will have a guest preacher in worship. The Reverend Larry Iannetti will be with us once again.

And looking ahead to July – we will have a lay led service on July 3. Anyone who would like to participate in the service, all you need to do is let me know. If you would like to do something on your own – like a sermon or reflection; if you would like to read a scripture; if you would like to be a leader in a responsive piece in the bulletin; if you would

like to do a prayer (either one you compose or one written for you) – all you need to do is let me know. It would be wonderful if we have an assortment of different voices.

Also happening in July is our joint service with our sisters and brothers from Edwards and Plymouth Churches. We will be hosting it on July 10 – hopefully on our back lawn if the weather cooperates.

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. 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

## Missions

### 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 (Edmands Road in Framingham). This involves weighing and bagging produce, and sometimes some light "pick-your-own." The process takes about one hour. Produce is bagged, labeled, and stored in a cooler that is then delivered by the volunteer to the pantry (Concord 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 10 to mid-October. Volunteers always take home a sample of fresh herbs, flowers, and their favorite fruit or vegetable --some berries just have to be eaten that day! For more information see Mary Memmott or talk to Linda Hilliard, Terri Taylor, or Ronda Yeomans -- all past volunteers. See you at the farm!

### Stearns Farm Work Day – June 11th

Farmers of all ages and abilities are welcome to join us at our farm work day Saturday, June 11, 9:45-noon, at Stearns Farm, Edmands Road, Framingham, followed by an optional "stone soup" lunch. We guarantee rewarding work, camaraderie, and the sense of satisfaction that comes from planting and working on a beautiful, expertly-run farm. Our work hours help us share with those in need as we collect food all season to bring to the food pantry. Please sign up in the fellowship hall or see Mary Memmott for more information.



Mary Memmott

## Christian Education

Sunday School – Transition to Summer and “Camp Grace” We will have “Camp Grace” activities for kids of all age on the following Sundays this summer: June 26, July 17, 24 and Aug. 14, 21. Children will still attend worship until the “handshake of peace” on these Sundays, but then leave for outdoor activities and an ice cream snack. 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. Musical talent is always welcome as well – does anyone have a good camp song to share?

- June 5 and June 19 will be intergenerational services. June 12 will be “A Birthday of the Church Party” for the children.

*Ronda Yeomans*

## Grace Women United

GWU will have its regular meeting on Wednesday, June 8th. We will finalize our plans for our annual luncheon to be held on Wednesday, June 15th and hopefully spend time getting the upstairs kitchen reorganized. This will be our last meeting until September.

*Lynn Burdett*

## Book Club

The Book Club will meet in late June at 10:00 AM in the church library. For details, contact Lynn Burdett. All are welcome to attend book club meetings.

## From the Pastor *Continued from page two*

But it is also true that you have been injured and the relationship is injured. When my hands are soapy and the pitcher I’m washing slips and breaks on the floor, I’m sorry and certainly didn’t intend to break the pitcher. The pitcher is still broken, isn’t it?

As our human lives progress, we drop the pitcher. We injure and break relationships. We let relationships slip and shatter from clumsiness. We let relationships grow shallow and die for lack of energy, lack of attention, lack of caring. You know by now that I’m not one to accept that my relationship with God, or yours, is broken because Adam and Eve ate an apple. Rather, it is broken because I haven’t had a conversation with

God often enough. And so I say things and do things outside my relationship with God on matters that are important to God. You too? Let’s agree to make a change today.

Pick your metaphor! Write a letter to, post on Facebook, Tweet, text, phone, or go for a walk with God and let God in on what you want to do. Let God in. I pray that you find a way to pray. In the name of our God who is still listening to people like you and me,

*Peace and Blessing,  
Pastor Brad*

## Cans for Communion Summer

### Stock-the-Pantry Sundays\*

**June 5 and June 12**

*Let’s try to reach 100 cans!*

**Always needed:**

**soup, pasta, sauce, canned fruit, veggies, cereal, tuna, peanut butter**

**\*Cans for Communion will then take a break until September**

## Grace Congregational, UCC

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