

# GRACE NOTES

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

## Congregational Meeting is June 7

The church's congregational meeting will be held on Sunday, June 7, immediately after church. At this meeting, church members will be asked to approve the annual reports and vote on the 2009/2010 leadership plans.

**Note:** Ministry team chairs and other reporters need to submit their annual reports by May 24 so that the annual report can be printed and distributed a week before the congregational meeting.

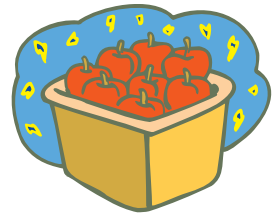
A light lunch will be served; child care will be provided.

## Spring Lecture Series

*(Hosted by Faith in Action)*

### Tuesday, May 26 - 7:00 PM Good Nutrition: For You and Your Family

What's the difference between light and low-cal foods? What are saturated fats - and do they matter? What's the alternative to refined sugars? Is it smarter to buy only organic? What if your child has food allergies? How can you shed that extra weight without feeling deprived? Sorting through the misinformation overload around good and bad foods can be overwhelming and discouraging.



Nutritionist Camille Hendsbee of Megna Nutrition will speak at Grace about making healthy eating choices for yourself and your family. Her message is simply that eating healthier and living cleaner gives us a greater chance at a long and better quality life.

This is a free lecture. Attendees are invited to bring canned goods for the Metrowest Food Pantry. Reservations are not needed. Refreshments will be served.

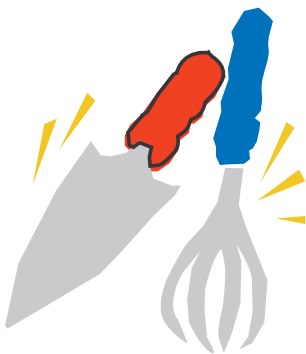
## Spring Cleanup at Grace!

All who are able are asked to join the Stewards on Saturday, May 2, to help clean up the gardens and yard at the church. We will begin at 9:30 but will be happy to welcome help at any time.

The more who come and pitch in, the sooner we will be done.

Bring your gloves, favorite rakes, etc.  
Cold drinks and coffee will be available.  
Feel free to bring your lunch or we can send out for pizza or sandwiches.

Hope for good weather!



### Grace Notes

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May 2009

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Dear Ones,

As April draws to a close, Framingham is full of blossoms. Daffodils and dandelions, cherry trees and magnolias, forsythia and clover can all be found responding to sunnier days and warming soil with color and variety. What a good world we live in and how beautiful is the place where we dwell with our God!

At Grace Church, we have some promises that we inherit from our history. There is a Covenant, a statement made in the early stages of forming a church that says what beliefs those people intended to hold in common. In our Sunday worship, we nearly always announce that, "No matter who you are or where you are on life's journey, you are welcome at Grace Congregational United Church of Christ!" We have a Mission Statement and Core Values that provide us and the world with information about the kind of people we intend to be. We inherit great statements of faith and definition from our long association as part of the United Church of Christ. Less obviously, perhaps, we have bylaws which capture part of our promises to each other and to our neighbors about how we will conduct our business.

I believe that our statement of inclusiveness is the strongest, clearest statement of purpose out of all of these sources. Here it is:

*We believe that lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people share with all others that worth that comes from being unique individuals created by God. We welcome lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people as members and participants of Grace Church through affirmation of faith. As members of the Body of Christ and of Grace Church, lesbian, gay bisexual, and transgender people are expected and encouraged to share in liturgy, life, all levels of employment, and leadership of the congregation.*

We recognize that our openness must be placed so that all can see and that our affirmation requires affirmative steps.

What do I mean by singling out this statement as "the strongest, clearest" of them all? Well, it has

characteristics that make it strong and clear in a way that is different from others of our various statements. First, it possesses sufficient specificity that one can use it to assess a program, an initiative, a purchase, a decision, etc. It rules out some behaviors and includes some behaviors. Second, the statement responds to a need in our wider community that matters. Third, it promises – we promise – to do something, to take action.

Are any of you able to join me to walk in the Pride 2009 Parade on June 13? We can march as Grace Church within the parade permit for the Massachusetts Conference of the United Church of Christ. They will have a sign made commercially for each church that registers (free) and all the churches march behind the Mass Conference banner. We can wear our Faith In Action t-shirts, perhaps.

In a time of blooming and new growth, what other important needs in our wider community call us to respond with a specific, action-demanding statement? What else can bloom from our garden's rich soil?

Peace and Blessing,  
Pastor Brad

## Cans for Communion May 3rd

This month the food pantry has especially requested: **CANNED STEWS** and **CEREAL**.

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.

## Ministries

### Stewards

Jean Burr, Chair  
Frank Carney  
Judy Sebastian  
Tim Taylor

stewards@  
gracechurchucc.org

## Stewards

Many have noticed that our property has recently been surveyed. This has been done by the Town of Framingham in order to correctly locate the town's easement which passes through our property. There is currently a 16" sewer pipe entering the easement from Salem End Road running through to Maple Lane. This pipe must be changed to a 24" pipe in order to meet present pipe flow requirements. Actual work will probably begin sometime after Labor Day, take no more than 2-3 weeks, and be completed prior to November 15. We have been assured that all aspects of church property which are disturbed in any way will be repaired or replaced,

including the playground, landscaping, driveway, or any other feature affected. The Stewards will be meeting with the Project Manager soon so watch *Grace Notes* for any further developments.

### Reasons for recycling

Dear Abby recently offered the following information for anyone interested in how long it takes the items we toss into our landfills to decompose – "Paper 2-5 months; Orange peels 6 months; Milk cartons 5 years; Filter-tip cigarettes 10-12 years; Plastic bags 10-20 years; Leather shoes 24-40 years; Plastic containers 50-80 years; Disposable diapers 75 years; Tin cans 100 years; Aluminum cans 200-500 years and Styrofoam NEVER!

## Mission

Mary Memmott  
Member-at-Large  
Missions  
Facilitator

## Save the Date – Saturday, June 6 – Fun at Stearns Farm!

The harvest season is coming soon!

Grace Church will start its third season as a member of Stearns Farm in Framingham. This year our work day at the farm will be Saturday, June 6, 9:45 a.m. – 12 p.m, followed by an optional "stone soup" lunch.

There is work for all ages and abilities – from sitting at a table planting seedlings to getting down and dirty out in fields. Later in June we will start collecting our share of produce on alternate Fridays. Half of the produce we collect will be available for members after church; the other half goes to the Framingham Food Pantry as a welcome surprise on Saturday mornings.



This is an important way for Grace to make its presence known in the community – please consider joining in!

**Deacon  
Ruth Carney, Chair  
George Tynes  
Karolyne White**

**deacons@  
gracechurchucc.  
org**

People of Grace,

We are well into Spring and with the turn in the weather the promise of Summer is at hand. For sports fans, our Boston teams (Bruins, Celtics and Red Sox) are doing well. Spring plants are blooming and pollen is flying. New life beginning to expand!

Thank you to one and all who participated in the Holy Week services. We had wonderful participation and attendance at the Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday and Easter services at our church.

**We are now looking ahead to the Sundays in May:**

On May 3rd, our Director of Music will be away. May 10th is Mother’s Day and we will have our inter generational service with communion on the 10th instead of the 3rd. May 17th is a very special day in the lives of our Pastor Brad (and Debbie) and our Director of Music, Susan. Brad, Debbie and

Susan will be away at their respective sons’ college graduations. May 31st is Pentecost Sunday – remember to wear something red to commemorate the birthday of the Christian church.

We are proceeding with our Natural Church Development program. Pastor Brad will be sitting down with those who have completed their Spiritual Gifts Inventory. Have you met with Brad, yet? If not, Brad will be contacting you, but you do not have to wait for his call, you can call and schedule your time with him.

If you would like to provide flowers for the altar, please be in touch with Ruth Carney. You may bring flowers from your home garden or if you wish to have her order flowers from our florist, the current price is \$35.00.

As always, 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 bulletin board in our fellowship area. There are still many, many, many openings!

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

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## Confirmation schedule

- May 2nd Day of Work Service with Worcester Area Mission Society: leave Grace at 8:00 AM, return at 6 pm
- May 9th 6:30 pm - 9:00 pm - Pizza, Movie and discussion, Worship Prep
- May 10th : 10:00-11:00 Worship Leadership
- May 17th 1:00-3:00 (regular)
- May 24th - Memorial Weekend - no confirmation
- May 31st 1:00-3:00 (regular)
- June 6th - 6:30 pm - 9:00 pm Pizza, Movie and discussion, Worship Prep
- June 7th - 10:00-11:00 Worship Leadership

Hold the date: Confirmation service June 21st!

## Ministries

**Christian Education**  
**Daleen Perkins**  
**Ronda Yeomans**

*christianeducation@  
 gracechurchucc.org*

## Christian Education

Hearty thanks to all the children and adults who helped to organize, run and participate in the Christian Education events in April. Kudos to the Worship Planning team who successfully integrated the children into the inter generational services. Thanks also to the children who practiced hard in order to sing or play instruments in Palm Sunday and Easter services. Thanks especially to Susan Minor, music director, and Terry Taylor for facilitating these offerings.

In a generous display of cross generational caretaking, Grace Women United will lead the children in assembling Child World Service kits for school children in impoverished places. Thank you ladies for being the spiritual village which raises our children.


There are no formal Sunday School classes on May 10 in honor of Mother's Day. Christian Education will

take place in the inter generational service so that families may worship together on this holiday.

Regular Sunday School class will be held May 17 and 24. Please contact Daleen Perkins if your family will be away for Memorial Day weekend so that we may plan accordingly. Pentecost is May 31 and will be celebrated with an inter generational service

New Child Care Staff hired: Welcome Paige Lizotte! We are delighted to announce the nursery will be staffed very soon. Paige is a delightful Framingham State College junior who looks forward to working with children too young for Sunday School and/or helping in the classroom should the need arise. Paige is in the process of giving notice to her former Sunday employer but plans to start work at Grace by mid May. We eagerly anticipate her arrival!

## Grace Church calendar - May

	May 2	8:00 AM	Men's Group	May 17	10:00 AM	Worship
		8:00 AM	Confirmation Work		11:15 AM	Faith in Action
		9:30 AM	Day at WAMS Stewards Yard Clean Up Day		1:00 PM	Confirmation class
	May 3		Cans for Communion	May 18	1:00 PM	Worship Planning
		10:00 AM	Worship	May 20	7:30 PM	Stewards
		Evening	Confirmation class	May 23		Annual Reports due to office
	May 4	1:00 PM	Worship Planning	May 24		Memorial Day Weekend
	May 5	7:30 PM	Central Council		10:00 AM	Worship
	May 9	6:30 PM	Confirmation pizza and movie		1:00 PM	Confirmation class
	May 10	10:00 AM	Worship (Leaders: Confirmation class)	May 25		Memorial Day Holiday
		1:00 PM	Confirmation class	May 26	7:00 PM	FIA lecture -nutrition
	May 11	1:00 PM	Worship Planning	May 27		Eat at Eagles
		7:30 PM	Women's Lectio	May 31	10:00 AM	Worship
	May 13	11:30 AM	GWU meeting		1:00 PM	Confirmation class
				June 7		Congregational Meeting



## Women's Retreat(s)!

This year our 24 hour retreat will be held in September - Friday the 18th until Saturday the 19th - in Cohasset. This is the retreat center we have used the last few years to our great benefit.

We will be having a "mini-retreat" of sorts to keep us going until then on Sunday, May 31st. We will gather for a (relatively) early dinner and then attend the Open Spirit service held at the Performing Arts Center on the 3rd floor of the Danforth Museum. The time and space for gathering for dinner are yet to be determined. If you have any favorite places, let Terri or Laura know.

## 10 Good Things About Being a Smaller Church

On April 19, the Central Council hosted a Salads and Conversation gathering after church. About 25 people gathered to discuss the topic: What are the 10 good things about being a smaller church? It was a lively and fun discussion. Here are the comments that were recorded on the newsprint.

- Level of involvement is at a higher percentage
  - Opportunities to have a bigger role
  - Allowed to take ownership
  - Receptive to change, to try new things
  - Commitment is high
  - Projects easier to start
- 
- (Perhaps) more comfortable for those who didn't grow up in "church" or as a "Christian" to enter
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- Like a village
  - More intimate
  - Physical space is more intimate
  - Closer knit family
  - Know everyone
  - Flexibility
  - Authentic, honest, no hiding, plain
  - Support and love for one another (is greater)
  - Easier to make friendships in a small group (inclusiveness)
  - It is easier to practice our faith together
- 
- Pastor is (more) approachable
  - Informal
  - More voices heard better in worship
  - Children's participation is valued, more spontaneous, more meaningful
  - Fun having a small group of singers
  - Open and Affirming
  - Quiet location
  - Close to Dunkin' Donuts

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The Book Club will meet again on May 27 at 10:00 AM. This month they are reading Geraldine Brook's *People of the Book*.

### May Baskets sales

Several GWU members set up a table and sold May Baskets in front of Wal Mart on Saturday, April 25. Sales were brisk, bringing a total of \$257.50 since Palm Sunday.