

GRACE NOTES

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

More Congregational Conversation

On November 8 and November 15, the Leadership Ministry team plans to continue with our series of Congregational Conversations – a process intended to allow our community to make decisions about several issues that affect everyone and should have everyone’s input

On November 8, we will continue to discuss our thoughts on the need for a larger meeting space. If you didn’t get a chance to provide input into the September 20th conversation, this will be a chance to do so. Maybe you have had a chance to think more and have something to add, and this is a chance to do so. You might find it helpful to check out the October Grace notes to review a summary of key points from the first meeting.

On November 15, we will proceed in one of two directions. Either we will talk about 1) ideas around accommodating distinct and at times conflicting preferences around worship styles, or 2) the potential for a group to use the facility during the week for an ESL program. If the latter item is at a stage where it is ready to move forward, then that will be the topic.

Thanksgiving Service 2009

Framingham’s Annual Interfaith Thanksgiving Service will be celebrated on Tuesday, November 24th at 7:30PM at Plymouth Congregational Church. The Rev. Julie Carson from St. Andrew’s Episcopal Church will be our speaker.

We are asking for donations of goodies for the reception (Plymouth Church will supply beverages and people to serve). We also invite any and all of you to come join an impromptu Interfaith Community Choir as in the past, gathering at 6:30PM for rehearsal. They will sing “Now Thank We All Our God.”

Press Release on Church Event

Grace hosts successful Styrofoam recycle event

Rain did not prevent more than 100 people from taking their Styrofoam (rigid polystyrene plastic) to Grace Congregational Church, in Framingham, on “Make a Difference Day”, Saturday, October 24. Many of their vehicles were so full of Styrofoam and packing peanuts, that only enough room was left for the driver.

Although about half of the vehicles were from Framingham, people drove from as far away as Leominster and Charlestown. Many had been searching for a place to recycle the abundance of Styrofoam that had been collecting in their attics and garages for up to five years. One person dropped off 4 take- out containers and apologized

because she did not have enough notice to save more and wanted to do her part.

ReFoamIt LLC, a Framingham based company, was at the

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Dear Ones,

Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. And Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

Matthew 28:16-20

These five verses end the text we know as the Gospel according to Matthew. We hear this story in a unique context when we consider the "Giving of the Law" in Exodus 20. Like that older story, it tells one story about how humans get a message – commands – from the holy one. In both stories, the commands are meant for a tight-knit community; Israel in the first case and the disciples in Matthew. Like other people through the centuries, we accept that these messages apply to us. We follow the commandments the Lord gave to Moses and the Israelites on Mount Sinai. We inherit the same responsibilities Jesus handed to his disciples on the mountain in Galilee.

The centerpiece of this reading is verse 19 and is frequently known as The Great Commission. "...go...make disciples of all nations, baptizing them...and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you."

At Grace Congregational United Church of Christ, we bear a legacy of lots of baptisms! We can take joy in how year after year we have taught what Jesus commanded to all people, young, old, and middle, who seek to learn it. We have raised up some who have gone away from us to tell the stories, explain the good news of Jesus Christ, and demonstrate through wholesome living the Christian way in some other place.

Our church is like a busy restaurant; full of our efforts at setting the table, serving the food, crashing the pots and pans around in the kitchen, inventing new recipes, and proudly displaying the day's specials. We exist to delight the palate of all who come, to nourish them, to change their lives for the better, and to share with them the grace of God in action.

That's bold stuff. And sometimes, we have not had the grace and unity to accomplish all we could envision. Sometimes we have encountered chal-

lenges that left us bruised, abandoned, and weak. We have questioned ourselves and each other. Beloved, that's why we have this church and each other, isn't it? We have each other so that there is someone to carry the effort when we are not up to it. We have each other so that we have someone to be present and helpful, one to another. And always, at Grace Congregational United Church of Christ, we pray. We pray because we have come to the mountain like the disciples before us who "worshipped him; but some doubted." Through prayer we learn the truth of the last sentence of Matthew. It is as stunning and clear a message from the holiness at the center of creation as you could wish. Read it again. Then say this prayer.

Make my steps firm, O Lord, that I do not stagger at the uneven motions of the world, but go steadily on the way; neither limiting my journey by the weather I meet, nor turning aside for anything that may befall me, for you are with me. Amen.

Peace and Blessing,
Brad

Have we forgotten God?

Submitted by Ruth Carney

We have been the recipients of the choicest bounties of heaven; we have been preserved these many years in peace and prosperity; we have grown in numbers, wealth and power as no other nation has grown.

But we have forgotten God. We have forgotten the gracious hand which preserved us in peace and multiplied and enriched and strengthened us, and we have vainly imagined, in the deceitfulness of our hearts, that all these blessings were produced by some superior wisdom and virtue of our own.

Intoxicated with unbroken success we have become too self-sufficient to feel the necessity of redeeming and preserving grace, too proud to pray to the God that made us.

It has seemed to me fit and proper that God should be solemnly, reverently and gratefully acknowledged, as with one heart and one voice, by the whole of the American people. I do therefore invite my fellow citizens in every part of the United States, and also those who are at sea and those who

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Grace Church Christmas Fair

Saturday, December 5 ~ 9am - 2pm

Merchandise Needed

- Hand-crafted items
- Cookies, breads, pies and cakes
- Gift/collectibles - choice items or recycled new gifts
 - Books/CDs/DVDs
- Holiday decorations and crafts
 - Jams/jellies
 - Gift Baskets
 - Raffle

Also:

Luncheon, Children's Activities,
Mission Outreach

No Rummage, No White Elephant, No Old Toys

Christmas Table

Pull out your Christmas decoration box early this year - and see if there are any decorations you would like to recycle to the fair.

Gift Baskets

Please assemble a small basket (or two) that we can sell for between \$10 and \$15.

Raffle

We would like to have a few higher priced raffle items. Donations (suggestions) welcomed.

Volunteer

- Coordinate a booth
- Volunteer to sell for a few hours
- Assist with the coffee/luncheon

Other ways to help!

- Post fliers around town
- Spread the word
- Help with cleanup after the fair



Schedule

The Fair will be from
9 am to 2 pm
Set up will be all day
Thursday and Friday,
Dec. 3 nd 4 until 6 pm.
Those helping on
opening on Fair day
should arrive by 8:30.
However, come and help
whenever you can.

Inviting Our Old Friends

We're going to make a special effort this year to invite past members and dear friends to drop by the Christmas Fair. They will receive a separate flier and mailing. Name suggestions (and addresses) welcomed of those who might enjoy stopping by that Saturday and renewing old friendships.

Questions, suggestions or to lend a hand,
speak to Bevely Ablondi, Lynn Burdett,
Jean Burr, Linda Hilliard,
or Judy Sebastian.

Missions

Cans for Communion

This month the food pantry has especially requested: pasta and sauce and canned vegetables. 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.

Earth-Care Education Series Continues – Book Group Tues., Nov. 3rd

Need an excuse to read a good book or find a new recipe? The Earth-Care Education series with Edwards and Grace Church continues with a book focus this month. We have chosen the book *Animal, Vegetable, Miracle*, by Barbara Kingsolver. We will meet for an informal discussion of the book on **Tuesday, November 3, 7 p. m.**, at Grace. Dessert, coffee and tea provided. This creative and engaging account of one family's attempt to eat locally over the course of the year is packed with recipes, good humor, and thought-provoking ideas. We hope you will join us for a lively discussion.

*Mary Memmott
Member-at-Large*

Thanksgiving

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are sojourning in foreign lands, to set apart and observe the last Thursday of November as a day of Thanksgiving and praise to our beneficent Father who dwelleth in the heavens.

*—Abraham Lincoln,
1863 Thanksgiving Proclamation*

Stewards

Although there are a few odds and ends to be cleaned up in the yard, the Stewards are pleased with the results of the **sewer project**. We can look forward to having a lovely lawn, re-stained play yard and new parking lot next spring. Brad has been clearing out brush, etc. close to the stone wall, which has opened up the view from Salem End Road. (Thanks, Brad!)

Members are urged to consider volunteering to serve on the grounds team so that plans can be made for upgrading our **landscaping in the spring**. You are not signing up to mow the lawn and plant gardens, although you can if that's what you would like to do, but to help decide both the short and long future of our outdoor appearance.

Please be thinking ahead about your commitment of time, talent & treasure to Grace Church. Soon it will be time to put together the **church budget for 2010**, and for each of us to decide upon our personal giving to the church. Our new moderator, Linda Dunbrack, has asked us to communicate with one another in order to make decisions about our future building space and programs. Each of us should be part of these major decisions.

Jean Burr

Faith in Action

There have been two major undertakings this past month by this team, and we are happy and proud to report that they have both been successful. This would not have been the case without the support of all the members and friends of Grace.

- During the month of September, we sold tickets to **Lord & Taylor's Benefit Bash** which took place on October 6. The tickets, at \$5.00 each brought in \$270, which went to sponsor the Walk to Prevent Homelessness. There will be additional money coming from this venture (a portion of the store's proceeds for the day) but at this point in time, we do not know the amount.
- We believe that we did help the environment on **Make a Difference Day** on Saturday, October 24, when we sponsored our first Styrofoam recycling day. Our collection, when processed, weighed between 250 and 300 pounds. That's a lot! Thank you to everyone who spread the word by hanging posters, verbally passing the word, bringing foam, and helping out at the church on Saturday. A special thank you to Evie & Al McGuirk for donating a composter for the drawing; to ReFoamit (Barbara & Dave Sherman) for being here to take the Styrofoam, and donating 4 bottles of Odor Gone for the drawing; and to the Yeoman and Memmott kids for their enthusiasm and assistance packing the truck. We have heard from several out of town people about the possibility of having a similar collection in their towns! Although nothing definite has been decided about a date for our next collection, we will be having another, so continue saving that foam!! In the meantime, see press release on page one.

Deacons

People of Grace,

Most Americans, learning about Thanksgiving's origin, hear or read about the destitute Pilgrims who suffered greatly during their first bitter winter in America. Many Pilgrims got sick, and half of them died. What we don't focus on enough is the fact that Native Americans took pity on the Pilgrims. They befriended the newcomers and gave them food. They taught them how to survive the vicious cold months. Then, when the earth grew warm again, the Indians taught the Pilgrims how to grow various crops and how to store any surplus. It was primarily because of the natives' friendship and helpfulness that the Pilgrims began to eke their way from disaster to fruitfulness. It's no wonder that when the Pilgrims had their first successful harvest, they invited their Indian neighbors to celebrate with them. The natives didn't come empty-handed. They furnished venison, wild turkeys and probably vegetables from storage. It was, more or less, a potluck affair. The Pilgrim leaders prayed gratefully at the occasion. We can be confident that an unseen but not unexpected Guest was very much present that day.

On November 24, 2009, we can gather together with our sisters and brothers from other Framingham religious communities at Plymouth Congregational Church, UCC at 7:30 PM for the Community Thanksgiving Service.

What other activities will be happening specifically at Grace in November, you ask? Well,

On November 8th and 15th, we will be having **Congregational Conversations** after worship. November 22nd is going to be **"Blue Jean Sunday and Greening of the Church."** You are invited to wear comfortable clothes to church and stay to decorate the church for Advent and Christmas. There will be something for everyone to do, no matter what your age or physical abilities. Please mark your calendar now and save the date of November 22nd. **(The first Sunday in Advent is November 29, 2009)**

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.

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.

As the wind blows and the weather becomes increasingly crisp, whether you are part of a small or large gathering, we wish you a blessed Thanksgiving!

May you always feel
God's blessings,
Deacons
Ruth Carney
Karolyne White

Christian Education

A hearty and sincere "Thank you!" to Laura Buck, Carl Buck, Linda Hilliard and Molly Wyatt for teaching and assisting Sunday School in October. This past month we studied the 10 Commandments unit from Come Join the Circle. Thanks also to Pastor Brad for continuing this theme in the intergenerational service on Nov. 1. Ronda Yeomans and Mary Memmott will be teaching the remaining four Sundays in November.

Please let them know if your children will not be in class so that we can plan supplies accordingly.

As always any offers to teach or assist are greatly appreciated. Please call Ronda Yeomans at 508-877-7504 if you think you might be available.

Ronda Yeomans

The Book Club is reading *Olive Kittridge* by Elizabeth Strout for their November 18 meeting. The January 27 book is Anna Quindlan's *One True Thing*.



Grace Women United will meet on Wednesday, November 18. They will be going to the New England Book Fair with the Book Club.

Grace Church calendar - November

November 1	Cans for Communion 8:45 AM Singers 10:00 AM Worship Sunday School	November 16	11:00 AM	Worship Planning
November 2	11:00 AM Worship Planning	November 18	11:30 AM 7:30 PM	Grace Women United Stewards
November 3	7:00 PM Earth Care Discussion	November 22	Stewardship Sunday 8:45 AM 10:00 AM	Singers Worship Sunday School Greening the Church
November 7	8:00 AM Men's Group		11:30 AM	Worship Planning
November 8	8:45 AM Singers 10:00 AM Worship Sunday School 11:30 AM Congregational Conversation/Building	November 23	11:00 AM	Worship Planning
November 9	11:00 AM Worship Planning	November 24	7:30 PM	Interfaith Thanksgiving Service - Plymouth
November 15	8:45 AM Singers 10:00 AM Worship Sunday School 11:30 AM Congregational Conversation/Service	November 26	Happy Thanksgiving	
		November 29	Advent begins 8:45 AM 10:00 AM	Singers Worship Sunday School
		November 30	11:00 AM	Worship Planning
		December 5	9:00 AM	Holiday Fair

Recycle event

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church to collect the Styrofoam and transport it to Rhode Island where it begins its journey into new products. Dave Sherman, President of ReFoamIt, explained how his company, in partnership with KWD Warehouse, processes the Styrofoam. It is ground up, then put into a specialized machine that compresses it into blocks, by eliminating the air and water content. The blocks can then be easily transported to other companies and turned into new products such as insulation, car bumpers, brackets and packing materials.

The collected packing peanuts were given to the UPS store located at 1257 Worcester Rd. The employees use the peanuts to pack items for shipping. Bob Hughes, owner, said he is able to make a difference by reusing this

material instead of having it go into the trash.

Jean Burr of Grace Church said other activities in the building included a kids' corner, featuring craft projects using recycled items. There were also informative handouts from the Town of Framingham's Recycling Department and a 20-question earth-care quiz, which surprised everyone by pointing out how simple changes in our life-style can really "Make a Difference."

Further information about this or future collections is available from ReFoamIt at 508-872-2323, or by e-mail (refoamit@verizon.net).

This collection could not have taken place without the help and support of the Town of Framingham, UPS Store, Conigliaro Industries and KWD Warehouse.

Grace Congregational, UCC

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