

# GRACE NOTES

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

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## Space Team Update

By Linda Dunbrack

It is official! Packets recently went out to about 30 architectural firms to solicit their interest in helping us develop options for creating a large multi-purpose space. We requested that interested firms provide information about their credentials, availability and experience. The packet that went to the firms was about 5 pages, a description of our needs, the scope of work, the expectations, and the process.

Here was our introduction to the project:

*"Grace Congregational United Church of Christ of Framingham Massachusetts (Grace Church) is seeking an AIA certified architectural design consultant to work with us to develop cost-effective options for constructing a multi-purpose space. We need to create a larger worship space and be able to use the same space for other ministry activities. We are both capable of imagination and boldness and nourished by tradition. We are looking for a design partner who will work with us to clarify our needs, generate site options, advise us about a suitable process for proceeding, and help us understand the costs and financing options, and work with us to ensure that we achieve our project goals."*

Below is schedule that we currently anticipate for choosing an appropriate firm.

### Process Schedule

RFP sent to architecture firms	10/27/2010
Interested firms indicate their interest via email	11/15/2010
Responses to RFP (Proposals) due	12/15/2010
Space Team evaluates proposals choosing candidates	1/15/2011
Candidate firms present to congregation	1/15/2011 – 2/15/2011
Congregation chooses a firm	2/20/2011

If you have any questions or want to see a copy of the packet that went out to architectural firms, please contact Pastor Brad or Linda Dunbrack for details.

## The Privilege of Pledging: Pledge Drive 2010

If it's November, there must be a pledge card coming in the mail! We have been as regular as the Christmas catalogs in our call to each other to financially support our church.

There are lots of ways we make our promises to each other real, right? We clean up the coffee hour and plan the worship. We gather in conversation about serious matters and then go to great lengths to be silly with each other. We hold others in prayer and concern. We spend time with each other, adults and children. We rally to ministries that affect our community and the wider world. The privilege of pledging now provides each of us with a way to name our promises to each other and make our promises to Grace Church tangible.

Look for a letter in the mail with a pledge card in it. There will also be pledge cards available at church. Then fill out a card and bring it to worship on November 21, which will be Stewardship Sunday this year. It is also Thanksgiving Sunday. What a nice coincidence!

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## Pastor's Message

Dear Ones,

There is a habit of mind that locates God's speaking phase in the deep past. We may surprise people, and ourselves, with the claim that God is Still Speaking. In our sharing during worship we share stories of how we have encountered God, caught a glimpse, felt a leading. We also share how God has been silent in our lives when we longed for a word of presence. We move closer and then away from the holy in our lives. It seems that the holy is also moving, sometimes closer and sometimes away.

For the next month or so, Thanksgiving and Advent and Christmastide, what if you consider that coming and going of the holy in your life? How about you make a point of listening and watching for the one who is both here and not here? Consider that you are part of a conversation, which requires that you speak and then, with a generous heart and concentration, that you listen.

### Budget Meeting: Nov. 14

Are you someone who has been involved in a ministry? Does that ministry need to have a budget for curriculum, food, training, or another type of expense we should anticipate in the year ahead?

On November 14, the Leadership Team will be holding a meeting after church to discuss your ideas and to provide feedback to help the Stewards Ministry team as they look ahead to January to plan the budget for 2011. All are welcome to attend.

Perhaps you are weary of exhortations to listen for the voice of God?

Well, suppose we think of our lives as a dance that we follow, pausing until our turn comes and then turning our figure to find the beat and our next position. How might we use the image of a dance to help us participate more deeply in our relationship with God?

I have a request, a wish. Would you dance? Here's an example of what I have in mind. In a room, by yourself, dance. You can have music playing or you can be singing to yourself or you can be in silence. Be alone. Hold onto something if you think you might get dizzy! Dance poorly, please. No perfection allowed. Dance as long as you can, even if it is just for a minute. You might dance a little jig. You might sweep through a ballroom figure. You might follow a pattern you have already learned.

There is no obvious pragmatic purpose in dancing by yourself, is there? So why do it? Dancing is mostly or completely about you and your human body. You are "incarnate" and dancing can make you aware of that. Dancing accomplishes no task, so when you are dancing that's all your doing with your body. Dancing alone is a time when you can dance with the holy as your only partner. Like a dance partner, the holy will come closer and then move away. If you dance, you will be opening yourself to the holy, the one who has always been your partner. Let me know how it goes!

We ought to dance with rapture that we might be alive... and part of the living, incarnate cosmos. ~D.H. Lawrence

*Peace and Blessing,  
Pastor Brad*

### Dessert and Book Discussion



### Eaarth by Bill McKibben

Tuesday, November 9th – 7:30 p.m.

Edwards Church, UCC; 39 Edwards St., Framingham

Join us if you've read the book cover-to-cover, just dipped into the first chapter, or are just curious why this book spells "earth" incorrectly. Bill McKibben has a powerful argument to make about the fate of our earth, a sobering argument that yet leaves room to hope. Come share your thoughts and share some food.

Dessert and beverages provided!

Edwards Church UCC and Grace Congregational Church UCC present another in our series of EarthCare events. Sponsored with the generous support of the Barnes Foundation.

For details see: <http://earthcareframingham.blogspot.com>, or call the Edwards office: 508-877-2050.

# Grace Church's Annual Christmas Fair

## Saturday, December 4

### 9 AM to 2 PM



### Lend a Hand!

#### Merchandise we need

- Hand-crafted items - knitted hats and mittens, aprons, scarves . . .
- Cookies and bread and pies and cakes
  - Jewelry
- Gift/collectibles - choice items or recycled new gifts
- Children's gifts • Books/ CDs/DVDs
- Holiday decorations and crafts
  - Sweets/candy/jams/jellies
- Recycled holiday decorations
  - Gift Baskets
  - Silent Auction

#### Volunteer

- Coordinate a booth
- Sell for a few hours
- Assist with the coffee/luncheon

#### Other ways to help!

- Post fliers around town (available in a few weeks)
- 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. 2 and 3 until 5 pm.

Those helping on opening on Fair day should arrive by 8:30. However, come and help whenever you can.

Speak to Jean Burr, Linda Hilliard or Lynn Burdett if you want to help.



### Calendar - October

November 6	8:00 AM	Men's Group meets	10:00 AM	Worship	
November 7		Cans for Communion	10:00 AM	Sunday School	
	8:45 AM	Singers	November 23	7:30 PM	Thanksgiving Interfaith Service (see page six)
	10:00 AM	Intergenerational Worship	November 25		Happy Thanksgiving!
	11:30 AM	Leadership meeting	November 28		First Sunday in Advent
November 9	7:30 PM	Eaarth Book discussion	8:45 AM		Singers
November 10	11:30 AM	Grace Women United	10:00 AM		Worship
November 14		Cans for Communion	10:00 AM		Sunday School
	8:45 AM	Singers	November 30	11:00 AM	Book Club (see page six)
	10:00 AM	Worship	December 3, 4		Set up for Fair
	10:00 AM	Sunday School	December 5		Holiday Fair
	11:30 AM	Ministry Budget Planning			
November 21		Stewardship Sunday (see page one)			
		Blue Jean Sunday (see page four)			
	8:45 AM	Singers			



Office Hours:  
Wednesdays/Thursdays 9:00 AM - 1:00 PM

People of Grace,

What a glorious autumn we are having. Who would believe the temperature would be in the 80s at the end of October! We hope you are finding time to just be in the moment, finding time to reflect and renew yourself, chat with God, find beauty and love.

There are many ways to give thanks. We usually remember to give thanks for our bounty, but I came across a lovely prayer that made me think about my life. I have the privilege of sharing this with you:

**A Prayer of Thanksgiving**

*Good and Gracious God, we offer thanksgiving for those other things: For troubles that shape and sharpen our patience, for doubts that let faith moments shine, and for confusions that keep our lives from being rigid.*

*For sufferings that help us share another's grief, for fears that mark real terror in the world, and for pains that open our eyes to joy. For sorrows that join our hands to hope and for loneliness that leads us to the heart of God.*

*For all these gifts by which we have become more human, we give thanks.*

*Let our thanks reach out and embrace the daily small ingratitude of our lives.*

*Amen.*

(Adapted from Touch Holiness, ed. Ruth C. Duck & Maren C. Tirabassi)

We are barely done with Halloween and it is time to be thinking about Advent. The first Sunday in Advent is November 28th. So, we are planning on a Blue Jean Sunday on November

21, 2010. Wear your jeans and plan to stay after worship to decorate the church for Advent and Christmas. No job too big or too small – there will be something for everyone to do, no matter what your age is or physical ability.

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,

*Ruth Carney  
for the Deacons  
Ruth Carney, Karolyne White*

• Thank you to those who stayed for the Stewards' open meeting after worship on October 17. It gave us an opportunity to share some of the items we have been discussing, as well as some things which have required our action on behalf of the congregation. If anyone has unanswered questions or suggestions, please relay them to a member of our team.

• We are currently working to put together a calendar of things to be done on a monthly/annual basis. These items will include, but not be limited to housekeeping chores & maintenance tasks. The calendar will serve to remind the entire membership of large & small things which need to be done regularly to maintain our building and grounds.

• Please be prepared to consider your stewardship pledge of time, talent and treasure for the coming year. Information about Stewardship Sunday can be found elsewhere in this issue.

*Jean Burr*

**Altar Flowers**

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.



**Day of Spirit at Edwards Church on Nov. 6**

Edwards Church is holding its third annual "Day of Spirit" on Saturday, November 6, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. This is a gentle day of spiritual renewal, with opportunities to learn and practice spiritual practices from a variety of faith traditions.

The cost of the event is \$10, which includes morning coffee, lunch, and closing tea, and all materials. Please sign up by November 3, by emailing Debbie Clark at pastor@edwardschurch.org, or by calling 508-877-2050.

## Christian Education

• We are halfway through the Fall 2010 session of Sunday School. Sunday School meets during worship (10-11AM) except for the first Sunday of the month when the children join their parents for an intergenerational service. There will not necessarily be Sunday School on long holiday weekends depending on family travel plans. Please contact Daleen Perkins if your children will not be attending Sunday School over a long holiday weekend.

• It takes a village to provide a good Christian Education for our children. Please consider teaching. It doesn't take much to teach. Just a willingness to pass on to the children what you have learned.

• Thank you to Mary Memmott and Laura Buck for their willingness to teach in October. During November and December, we will be exploring Christmas Journeys. The children will learn of the journeys of Jesus and his family in his early life. These journeys helped to define who Jesus is as Son of God and who he would become. The children also learn about persons and places in the bible through 'Bible 20 questions.' Please contact Daleen Perkins if you can teach.

*Ronda Yeomans and Daleen Perkins  
Sunday School Administrators*

## Faith in Action

Our activities in October included two major events, both of which turned out to be amazingly successful.

### **Not Ready for Anytime Players**

On the 16th, FIA sponsored the Not Ready for Anytime Players in their production of *Murder, Mayhem & Marshmallow Salad*. Those who were involved in the play and those who attended had a terrific evening of fun, food & fellowship. Thanks to Daleen Perkins, our director; the cast; and kitchen crew (Linda Hilliard, Lynn Burdett & Beverly Ablondi) for making this happen. Rumor has it that Brad has been given a DVD which captured much of the play, so even if you were unable to attend, perhaps you can someday watch the recording!

### **Styrofoam Day**

The next Saturday, the 23rd, was our fifth Styrofoam (and plastic tableware) collection day. Also, we had an electronics recycling company come to take away all kinds of obsolete electronics for a small fee. The amount of Styrofoam and plastic tableware was much greater than any time before, but even more heart-warming were the many people who came and thanked us for doing this for our community. We really did "make a difference" on the day that has been given that name.

Although the primary purpose for these two events was not to make money, we were able to turn in \$423 to offset some of the earlier expenses of Faith in Action. We will be meeting in mid November and will welcome any and all to join us as we begin to plan future activities.

## Missions

### **Nov. Cans for Communion Nov. 7th and 14th**

Thanksgiving can collection: Two Sundays to help you remember. The need at the Framingham Hope Pantry is great! The pantry is seeking STUFFING MIX, INSTANT POTATOES, and CANNED GREEN VEGGIES to round out their Thanksgiving baskets.

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 Wednesday or Saturday morning – see Mary Memmott with any questions.

### **From the director: Murder, Mayhem and Marshmallow Salad**

Thank you to all who made the Not Ready for Anytime Players, dinner theater on Saturday, October 16th, just a smashing success! What a great evening of good food, fun and fellowship. One of God's greatest gifts to us humans is laughter and that gift was in such abundance!

Every time we think of M T Socket, Rev. Peter Piper Porcupine or Lorraine, the musician, we will all smile. The chicken dance will never be performed that way again! Thank you one and all!

*Daleen Perkins  
Director of 'Not Ready for  
Anytime Players'*

## Thanksgiving Interfaith Service

Each November, the faith communities of Framingham “gather together” on the Tuesday evening before Thanksgiving for a shared worship service. At this service, we hear truth and beauty and community spoken from several faith traditions. Some are similar to ours and some quite different. This is one of the few events in Framingham that acknowledges and celebrates the rich culture of Framingham. Please set aside your other activities on November 23rd. Have dinner a little earlier (but plan to have dessert following the service!) Help get the homework done in the afternoon (and plan to have a conversation about the diversity of voices in our town.) Step out of your normal path and take this opportunity to see who is your neighbor. For 2010, your Interfaith Thanksgiving Service will be at 7:30 PM at Temple Beth Shalom, 50 Pamela Road. I’d love to see you there! - Pastor Brad

## A Book About Grace Church’s Journey

*Finishing With Grace: A Guide to Selling, Merging or Closing Your Church* is the title of a new book that has been co-authored by Linda Hilliard and Reverend Gretchen Switzer.

The purpose of *Finishing With Grace* is to teach congregations who are without other options how to move through this time faithfully. When Grace Church went through the journey of selling its building several years ago, Linda and Gretchen often said “If only there was a guide book that helped churches deal with this challenge.” They decided to write that book. Linda has written the practicalities (forming committees, deciding what to do with physical assets) and Gretchen has written about dealing with spiritual and emotional aspects of selling a beloved church home.

This is not a book about Grace Church per se (no names are used), although there are references to how the church dealt with certain situations.

United Congregational Church, United Church of Christ in Worcester, has undergone a similar experience as Grace. Reverend Terry Fitzgerald, Pastor, has this to say about *Finishing With Grace*:

*“This book is incredibly helpful to congregations considering the possibility of closing their church doors; it gives them the tools and the courage they need to go through this process. You lead a congregation step-by-step through every detail, as well as naming the deep emotional layers, both conscious and unconscious. I especially love the stories and anecdotes - both real and useful. You describe how to talk about everything and creative ways to deal with the wide variety of responses to this “earthshaking” and “faith-shaking” decision – and how it may even deepen faith. Lovely, fantastic job! With thanks from all who are faced with this momentous decision.”*

The book is on the Amazon and Barnes and Noble websites. The easier way to order copies is through the publisher’s website - <http://booklocker.com/books/5016.html>. Gretchen and Linda also have a blog/website – [www.finishingwithgrace.com](http://www.finishingwithgrace.com).



### Book Club

Bookclub is reading “The Lobster Chronicles” by Linda Greenlaw for November. Please note that the November meeting will be held on Tuesday, November 30 at 11AM instead of our usual Wednesday at 10AM.

### Grace Women Unted

GWU will meet Wednesday November 10 for discussion of the Fair and to work on our craft project.

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