

# GRACE NOTES

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

## Leadership Ministry Prioritizing and Planning Ministries and Activities for Healthy Growth

By Linda Dunbrack, Moderator

In July and August, the Leadership Ministry discussed how we our community can prioritize and plan ministries and other activities to promote the healthy growth of our church. We had some brainstorming sessions, set some goals, and talked about the fall calendar of activities. What follows are some of the fruits of those discussions.

### What results do we want from our ministries?

Our ministries should have a positive impact on the wider community and generate excitement in the community about our church. They should provide opportunities for us to share Christ’s message by word and example, while at the same providing opportunities for those not involved with a church to connect, participate, and make a difference. They should shed light on the dark places in Framingham and the world, especially those places where racism, poverty, addiction, and violence have left their mark.

If our ministries serve those purposes, then they will have a positive impact on those who engage in those ministries. This type of ministry enriches both those who are ministered to and

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## Rally Sunday – September 13

- Welcoming back our summer travelers
- Beginning the new Sunday school year
- Renewing our commitment to working together as a faith community to raise the children according to Christ’s teachings.
- Ice cream sundaes!

## Sewer Project Update

If you’ve been by the church recently, it must be apparent that the projected time frame for the sewer project was overly optimistic. Even though we predicted that possibility and planned for about 2 additional weeks, unexpected snags have prolonged the work even more. However, the construction crew has done a wonderful job cleaning up our parking area, allowing us access for the last two Sunday mornings. Now that most of the heavy equipment is gone, we are also able to use the building for our weekly meetings and activities.

As of today, August 24, many trees have been cut down and removed, the pipes are installed and the land has been roughly graded. All of the workers have been extremely cooperative and helpful throughout. Brownie has been cautiously filming on a daily basis and will have a blow by blow visual record available when all is done. Final grading and seeding of the lawn areas,

painting and reassembling the play yard, relocating the shed, repaving the parking lot and general cleaning of the whole area is now slated to be finished by September 4.

### Grace Notes

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Dear Ones,

In the summer, the youths who have lived in my house in Needham have to find jobs. They look for "summer jobs" that probably have little to do with what these same youths will do for work in the rest of their lives. The jobs tend to be associated with things that happen in the summer, like summer camp counselor or serving frozen custard at the Dairy Queen or cutting grass. The youths can't wait to get out of work at the end of the day because it is summer and they want to find their friends and enjoy! Yet they are proud of work they do.

We seek the one who said, "My burden is light and my yoke is easy." (Matthew 11:30) Great, you say! Sounds like following Jesus is not going to be a lot of work. There may be some work but we can probably keep doing the other things we think of as work at the same time. Carrying a light, easy burden won't interfere too much. I suppose there is no reason to be worried that if you follow Christianity – if you follow Jesus – that your neighbors will have any problem with you. After all, you aren't going to change how you dress. There aren't any particular ways you have to paint your front door. You aren't going to start making any funny noises. The people who live next door might not notice any change at all.

On the other hand, was Jesus speaking generally about the burden of following him? What if this quote was a message to a particular group of people once upon a time? What if Jesus spoke this way to a gathering of

his followers when they were feeling a little frightened by the way some people were staring at them, when they were feeling a little uneasy about having left previous livelihoods behind, when they were feeling a little worried about all his talk regarding how God was going to see justice done in the end?

If this verse of comfort was part of one specific conversation, maybe it isn't going to be true for every day that you spend following Jesus. Maybe, Jesus is not always and forever assuring us that his burden is light.

Remember, this is a guy who also talked about taking up one's cross – not his cross, your cross – and following. He said this a few times (Matthew 10:38, Matthew 16:24, Mark 8:34, Luke 9:23). If I use the phrase at all, I talk about "taking up my cross"

in a metaphorical sense, which is surely the way the Gospels mean us to understand it. And it is surely true that when we seriously try to follow "the way" of Jesus we will not be able to blend into the neighborhood as well as we might desire. People will know that we stand for something. People will know that we are thinking about something with cosmic significance. People will know we are Christians.

This summer, as the summer jobs come and go, consider what part of living in the kingdom of God is your work. What changed and what has to change? How does an observer know that you have taken up your cross? Much more importantly, what does it mean to you?

Peace and Blessing,  
Brad

## A Win-Win Opportunity

*Would you like to have a 20% discount on UGG boots? How about on a gorgeous new dress from Lord & Taylor? How does 15% off on anything else in that beautiful store sound? Well, you can have all of that and more!*

Faith in Action is partnering with Metrowest Opportunity Council, the sponsor for the Walk to Prevent Homelessness, to sell tickets to the Lord & Taylor Benefit Bash. Tickets are \$5 each and will entitle the buyer to all of the above on Tuesday, October 6. The proceeds from the ticket sales will go toward Grace's sponsorship of the walk on September 27. We now have the tickets available and will be selling them not only among ourselves, but we'll be having a table at the remaining concerts on the green in Framingham Center. We urge you all to buy a ticket, and also to take some to sell to your friends and neighbors. Also, of course, sign up to walk and/or sponsor one of our many members who have joined the walk for several years.

Tickets will be honored, not only at the Natick Mall, but also at the Prudential Center, Burlington Mall and the So. Shore Plaza stores. As an additional incentive for the organizations to sell a minimum of 50 tickets, those doing so will receive a percentage of the sales made that day.

*Lord & Taylor*

# An Update on My Journey

Dearest Community of Grace,  
 Two years ago, I started to explore a new direction in my approach to ministry by taking courses at Andover Newton Theological School. Something about the atmosphere and study just felt right! Then a year and a half ago, I approached our community about taking me “in care”: this is the first step in exploring if the path to ordained ministry is one that I am called for. Taking me in care means that you are supporting me with prayers and love and community while I travel this path. There is also a small group that meets with me to “check-in” periodically. This group is Brad, Laura, Leo and Linda D.

The next step, for the UCC, is to enter into a discernment process with an association, in our case that is the Central Association of the Massachusetts Conference. I entered this part of the process last November and was assigned a discernment advisor by the association to help guide me through this side of the ordination path. I meet yearly with the Committee on Ministry to evaluate where I am and if the path to ordination is still one that I should be pursuing.

This year I will start my field education. This a requirement to both graduate from ANTS (1

year) and to be considered for ordination (2 years). I will be serving as Student Pastor for the South Acton Congregational Church (SACC) from mid-September until the beginning of May. We have not finalized our learning agreement, but it will probably include explorations of music and intergenerational worship. While I am serving at SACC, Tim and the kids will still be attending Grace, with occasional ventures north. I hope to continue attending Women’s Lectio and other activities as scheduling permits.

Some have asked why I don’t serve at Grace for my field education and the answer is this: the role of this community, taking me in care, is a very important role to give me a safe and comforting place to come home to; as you might guess, I am a little bit nervous about this next stage, but your prayers and support will help me through. Also it is against the rules of ANTS.

I am doing my studies part-time, and that means I have another 4 years (at least) before graduation. Thank you all for sharing this journey with me.

Peace and Blessings,  
 Terri Taylor

## Grace Church calendar - September

September 5	8:00 AM	Men’s Group	September 16	11:30 AM 7:30 PM	Grace Women United Stewards
September 6	Cans for Communion 8:45 AM 10:00 AM	Singers Worship	September 20	8:45 AM 10:00 AM	Singers Worship Sunday School begins
September 7	Labor Day		September 21	11:00 AM	Worship Planning
September 11	Stearns Farm pickup		September 23	10:00 AM	Book Club
September 13	<b>Rally Sunday!</b> 8:45 AM 10:00 AM 11:00	Singers Worship Stearns Farm food	September 25	Stearns Farm pickup	
September 14	11:00 AM 1:00 PM 7:00 PM	Worship Planning Deacons Women’s Lectio Pot Luck	September 27	8:45 AM 10:00 AM	Singers Worship Walk to Prevent Homelessness
			September 28	11:00 AM	Worship Planning

## Missions

### Fall at Stearns Farm – Produce Pick-up – Upcoming Fridays – Sept. 11 and 25

We continue to enjoy our membership in Stearns Farm this year. Even as the tomatoes were struck by blight, many other crops have done very well. You are welcome to sign up for produce pick-up at Stearns Farm on alternate Fridays – see the sign-up sheet on the bulletin board. Pick-up is at your convenience, any time between 2-7 PM -- a great way to enjoy some nature at the end of a work week. Half of our produce will be shared with the pantry and the other half will come back to Grace for all to enjoy and share. On Sept. 13th (Grandparents' Day!) look for vegetables at church. The pick-up crew is welcome to

bring home flowers and herbs of the season, and sample the bountiful produce of the season.



### Cans for Communion Sept. 6

This month the food pantry has especially requested: CANNED VEGETABLES. Please remember that expired, damaged or unlabeled cans cannot be safely donated – the food pantry must dispose of these types of cans and this trash removal adds to their expenses. Thank you for your continued support of the Framingham Food Pantry!



### Walk to Prevent Homelessness 2009 – Final Countdown!

The sixth annual Walk to Prevent Homelessness is scheduled for Sunday, September 27 – 12:30-3:00 p.m. from Framingham Center Common to Brophy School and back. If you have decided to walk, please add your name to the sign-up sheet on the Missions Bulletin Board. The need this year during difficult economic times is particularly

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## Deacons

People of Grace, I would like to share something with you that made an impression on me:

***The Importance of the Unimportant*** – The greatest forces in the universe are never spectacular. Summer showers are more effective than hurricanes, but they get no publicity. The world would soon die without the fidelity, loyalty and consecration of those whose names are unsung. Any life, however humble, may take its place in the building of a better world and a more beautiful tomorrow. It is so easy to exaggerate the importance of the seemingly important and to underestimate the importance of the seemingly unimportant.

We may never realize that each of us can and do make a difference. We are not alone in this world.

We are now back worshipping in our building. As those of you who have been around know that the work the town is doing is not quite completed. Hopefully, soon all the work will be done – perhaps in time for Rally Sunday on September 13th.

The Deacons encouraged you to experience something different from Grace on the first two Sundays in August when our facility was closed and let us know what moved you (or not), what was fun (or not), what made you think differently (or not). What did you do on those Sundays? Let us know!

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.

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*



**The Not Ready For Anytime Players are considering putting on a play. Due to a scheduling conflict, it may not be this fall.**

**However, it's never too soon to start thinking about the production. Would you like to be a performer? Would you like to work behind-the-scenes? Will you come and watch (and have a great time)?**

**Speak to Daleen Perkins or Jean Burr if you would like to participate.**

## Christian Education

### Camp Grace

The entire Grace faith community sends an enthusiastic "Thank you!" to all those who have stepped forward to teach or assist with the Sunday School program over the summer. Special thanks to Mary Memmott for spearheading and organizing this effort. We greatly appreciate it! This summer's "Camp Grace" effort met for 5 sessions over July and August. Lessons have focused on "Jesus as the living water" which sustains us all. The children and adults put faith into action with a car wash fundraiser July 12. Funds raised supplemented the Grace Church donation to support health care in the Amazon. Sincere thanks to all those who worked so hard to accomplish this goal and also to make the

summer "Camp Grace" program a reality.

### Rally Sunday

Plans are currently underway for Rally Sunday on Sept. 13. This service traditionally welcomes back our summer travelers and kicks off the new school year for Sunday school. The service provides a forum for us to renew our commitment to working together as a faith community to raise the children according to Christ's teachings. After service, we will make our own ice cream sundaes as a festive celebration of the day.

### Sunday School begins

Official Sunday School lessons will resume on Sept. 20 with a focus on preparing for our participation in the Walk to Prevent Homelessness on Sept. 27. In general, the first Sunday of the month will be a family or community Sunday, with the children in service. The following Sundays of each month children may participate in lessons from the "Come Join the Circle" curriculum or in lessons tied into community outreach efforts such as providing supplies to the homeless, etc.

Teachers and helpers are always needed for Sunday school lessons. The CJC curriculum is easy to follow and offers leaders many choices. Please see Ronda Yeomans to volunteer.

## Stewards

### Parking Lot

Now that fall is back, we will again be seeing student cars in our parking lot. Although Framingham State will begin some classes on September 1, due to the delay of hot top repairs, we have made other arrangements for them through Labor Day. Anyone without a "dove sticker" for their car who would like one, they will be available at church on any Sunday morning.

### Cleaning

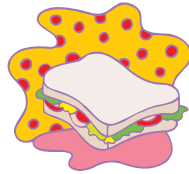
We are fortunate to have a new person cleaning the church. Thanks to Ronda's recommendation, Gloria Goncalves will be doing a thorough cleaning once each month. In the meantime, everyone using the building is reminded to leave it a bit cleaner than when they came! Please remove all trash, take all leftover food with you, or mark it for future use, and return everything to its proper place.

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great. The one-time grants that MWOC gives to families in crisis are critically needed to keep these families out of the shelter system and in stable homes in their communities.

Now is the time for walkers to get pledge forms and start collecting those pledges. All pledges should be collected and handed in at registration on the Common on the day of the walk. Pledge forms will be available after church every Sunday in September, or you can download them from <http://www.mwoconnection.org>. There is no minimum amount of pledges to participate, but every walker who raises at least \$50 will be entered in a raffle for some great prizes donated by local businesses. If you can't walk, but would like to sponsor someone, Mary Memmott can take your pledge or point out a walker to you. If you can give your time, but not your feet, on the day of

the walk, volunteers are especially needed to sit in a shady spot on the Common to register walkers from 12:30-1:30, or at the water station at Brophy School from 1:00-3:00 p.m. If you would like to help, please contact Mary Memmott.



### Feed those Walkers?

We would like to offer lunch to the Grace Church walkers after church on Sunday, Sept. 27. If you have a favorite dish you'd like to share, please sign up on the bulletin board in the fellowship room or contact Mary Memmott. This is a great way to support the walk without having to lace up your sneakers!

## Women's Lectio

### Pot Luck September 14

The new season of the Lectio Divina group starts up again on Monday, September 14th with our traditional Potluck Dinner starting at 7:00, followed by a time of Scripture exploration using the art form of Lectio Divina. From September through June we meet on the second Monday of each month to share in the spirit and wisdom of each other and of The Word. All women of Grace and friends of Grace are welcome to join us. Come when you can, you will always be welcome! All gatherings are held at Grace, 76 Salem End Rd.

### Retreat Update:

St. Joseph's Retreat Center, where we have held our 24 hour retreats the past few years, has become so popular that we have not been able to arrange for a Friday-Saturday retreat time there. One topic we will be discussing on the 14th is what are some other retreat facility options, so if you have a favorite, or one you have heard that might fit our group, bring along any information and ideas that you have!

## Faith in Action

Faith in Action will be taking some bags of school supplies to Frits and Anke Guersten and would like to add some other very needed items for the children in Appalachia. They send children's BOOKS, SNEAKERS, ART & SCHOOL SUPPLIES. The books and sneakers need not be new, just usable. (Frits cleans every pair of sneakers before mailing.) Although they don't ask for them, monetary donations are much appreciated to help defray shipping costs. Bring any items to Grace at any time, marked for Appalachia, and we will deliver them.

### Recycling News:



Obviously, the recycling event which was reported in the last issue of *Grace Notes*, and was tentatively planned for August, did not, for many reasons, take place. It is now, however, scheduled for Saturday, October 24, here at Grace. The primary goal will be to collect styrofoam and educate the public about recycling it, and other items.

We also will have displays, videos, handouts, fun events for the children, and more. Lots of helpers will be needed on that day. In the meantime, continue saving your styrofoam and let me know if you need me to store it for you until then. Put the date on your calendar and stay tuned for more information!

Call me, Jean, at 508-872-1082. Remember, it should not go into your town recycling bins!

## Leadership Ministry

those engaged in the work. Beyond simply making us feel good about ourselves, we are enriched, spiritually or otherwise, when we become “the light,” and people can see it within us.

### **Given the limited financial and human resources of the church, how can we make good choices about which ministries to engage in?**

We can choose ministries that are complementary and support one another. When we take the time to learn where there is passion and partners and people with the right spiritual gifts, our ministries are both fulfilling and sustaining.

An example of this concept in practice is the congregation’s support of Metrowest Outreach’s homelessness prevention program. Many will choose to participate in one way or another in the Walk to Prevent Homelessness, which is scheduled for September 27. Some will walk, some will sponsor walkers, some will make sandwiches, and some will provide logistical support. Faith in Action chose to support this ministry by partnering with Metrowest Outreach to have a table at the concert on the green on three Fridays to sell tickets for a Lord & Taylor event to benefit non-profits with sales going to “Prevent Homelessness.”

### **How does it fit with our wider goals?**

We’ve been one of the more organized and upbeat, multi-generational groups that walks for several years. People in Framingham get to see that there are people who care about prevent-

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ing homelessness. Funding goes to an effective organization with low administrative costs that has a very good success rate keeping people in housing. Walkers invite other friends to walk and eat with us and they have found the event to be rewarding. These are the very results we say we want from our ministries.

### **Coming soon: Congregational Conversations**

Conversations have been happening in small groups, sometimes in meetings and sometimes in the “corners” at coffee hours about three important topics that have a potential impact on us all. During the fall, we are going to have structured opportunities for the congregation to discuss these topics:

- **Worship:** Should we have two distinct styles of services to accommodate the varying preferences in our church community?
- **Space:** A larger space would be valuable for worship and other events. What are the different visions people have for making this a reality?
- **Sign and symbol:** What first impression do we want the community to have about our community of faith? What impact will various options have on different types of people who might consider us?

No dates have been set, and planning is in its infancy. If planning constructive conversations is something you would like to help out with, please let Linda Dunbrack know, as plans will be developed soon.

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**Book Club is reading**  
*Mary Called Magdalene* by  
Margaret George. We will  
have our first fall meeting on  
Wednesday September 23 at  
10:00AM.



Grace Women United will meet on  
Wednesday, September 16 at 11:30  
AM.