

GRACE NOTES

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

Peace Celebrations - See Page Six

Rally Day is September 11

We say welcome back every September on a Sunday we call Rally Day! This is a party day on which we call our community into

- a new year of programs,
- a new cycle of worship,
- a time to refresh our relationships with each other,
- a time to reset our personal spiritual journey
- a time to recommit to our shared life together
- and a time to celebrate our God, who sweetly brings the bright days of September.

How shall we celebrate this year? Are you hoping for ice cream? This isn't a day to wear your finest clothes since we our activities will spill over to the outdoors. So come prepared to hang around outside, come prepared for games, come prepared for a festival of the abundant life we share in the shelter and joy of God's enduring grace.

Styrofoam Collection - Oct. 22

...and Plastic Flatware that has been rinsed and packed in separate containers



10:00 AM to 3:00 PM

Volunteers are needed throughout the day. Speak to Jean Burr.

Notes from the Leadership Ministry Team

Summer has been a busy and exciting time for the Leadership Ministry Team. The Design Team from Janez Design has identified the constraints and possibilities for building expansion on our current site at 76 Salem End Road. Design concepts for an expanded building are under preliminary discussion. At the same time we are exploring the financial implications of proceeding with a building expansion.

In June, many members of the congregation met with the Design Team from Janez Design to discuss what they thought was important to have in an expanded building given the congregation's current and future ministry needs. The Leadership Ministry Team is very appreciative of the broad participation in that discussion, and for everyone's detailed, imaginative feedback.

The Design Team presented the Leadership Ministry Team with some preliminary design concepts in July. These design concepts incorporated the feedback from the congregation and the numerous constraints on building, including storm water management and conservation restrictions. The congregation had the opportunity to see the design concepts in early August,

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Dear Ones,

Lately, around my house, we've been watching back-to-back episodes of the television drama "Friday Night Lights." The stories follow the lives of teenagers and adults in a Texas where high school football is both a background and a focus. The characters are colorful and attractive and the plots are engrossing. The series ran for five seasons, ending just this past spring. So we can rent the series and watch without commercial interruption or week long suspense between episodes.

We are, however, affected by the original pacing of the show. I'm referring to the way scripts for television dramas build ramps of suspense up to each commercial break and wrap most of the story lines into some sort of resolution by the end of the episode. This requires that many conversations, in fact most conversations, end dramatically. Conversation ends with a dramatic exit, a loaded question that silences somebody, an intimidating verbal outburst, a devastating revelation, etc. "Slam! Then where is the money now? You don't get to talk to me that way young lady! I lied about working late all last week." That's drama for you!

That's drama of the melodramatic television sort. Dramatic conversation-enders are fine as entertainment. As experienced TV-watchers, we understand the difference between entertainment and the way real people speak to each other. At least, we who want to walk with Jesus should have a different understanding of conversation. Bible stories are not much help, I'm afraid. Bible stories were written for a specific audience, in several layers of context, and with a purpose. That's why some stories have such a powerful resonance with other stories – they are supposed to draw depth and meaning from that other story. That's why some of the language and references require some explaining. That's why conversations can be

loaded with powerful questions and thunderous pronouncements.

Perhaps you can find some help in the following excerpt from Paul's writings.

Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.--- Paul's Letter to Colossians, Chapter 4, verses 5-6

Paul assumes the transformation by baptism (and, for many of us, by later confirmation) in which we have "entered into the life of Christ." As the old prayer says, "... we ... dwell in him and he in us." I think that most of us continue to deepen our understanding of grace. Grace has within it the steadfast love of God, forgiveness, kindness, freedom, reassurance, and it is irresistible.

When I say that we continue to deepen our understanding of grace, I want to convey two things. First, we are following a way, a path that we sometimes call the path of Jesus. We are following the scent, the glimpse we had once, the small sound of grace. The "faith journey" is moving toward that taste of grace and cultivating our ability to follow the trail. The second idea is that we are called to incorporate into the way we live our lives a grace-filled way of living. We can only aspire to mimic the gracepower of God, seen in, learned from, and alive through Jesus. Yet our aspirations are not futile. Step by step and day by day, we can make our behavior more like the grace we have known, glimpsed, tasted, heard about....

That's why I share with you those words from the Letter to the Colossians. Our great ancestor preacher is urging us to strive, to "let" our conversation be full of grace. You can do it, I know you can. Start now, practice all this month. I'm sure that if you try, you will find that you can speak and listen (have conversations) with grace seasoned with salt. Trust me, that's entertainment!

*Peace and Blessing,
Pastor Brad*

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Faith in Action

Fall is approaching and my calendar is beginning to look as though it will be a busy one. Our team, alone, has several events planned, so please include the following dates on your schedules:

- September 9: We invite you and your friends to join us at 6:30 for MOVIE NIGHT. Brad has secured the DVD and right to show "FIREPROOF". This movie is recommended for adults only but if there is enough interest we will arrange to have a kids' movie upstairs. Snacks will be provided.
- September 18: BRUNCH/LUNCH: Following worship, all who would like to enjoy a meal together can do so, either at the Trackside Grille in Ashland, or at an alternate location if preferred. Plan on gathering at the restaurant at noon, or at the church following coffee hour for carpooling.
- October 22: STYROFOAM COLLECTION DAY: This will be the beginning of our third year of quarterly collection days. For the most part, each of these events has been more successful than those prior. As usual, we will be asking for volunteers to help! In the meantime, pass the word to others in the community. Even now, there are those who aren't aware of this project.
- October 29: HOW DID I BECOME A SENIOR AND WHAT SHOULD I DO ABOUT IT?: This question has occurred to many of us already, and

as much as our younger family members would like to not think about it, it will occur to them as well, sooner or later. We will be hosting a unique Life Care Planning panel discussion to assist in answering this question. More information, see back page.

- Date to be announced: NOT READY FOR ANYTIME PLAYERS: Due to the ☆☆☆☆☆ rating received at the last performance, Director, Daleen Perkins, is now ready to select cast members for a fall production. Don't pass up this opportunity to be part of it! Daleen adds: "Anyone who would like to join the Not Ready for Anytime Players (only requirements is you like to laugh and have fun) can contact me." Contact Daleen now!
- April 22: STYROFOAM COLLECTION DAY: This should be the best yet! This date is also EARTH DAY so, again, we will be part of a huge town wide celebration.

We continue to collect school/art supplies and gently used children's books and sneakers for the Appalachia children. You may leave items at the church at any time. The date of our next meeting will be announced soon. Please join us with your support and suggestions.

Jean Burr, Faith in Action

Calendar - September

September 3	8:00 AM	Men's Group	September 14	Noon	Grace Women United
September 4	CANS FOR COMMUNION		September 18	9:00 AM	Singers
	9:00 AM	Singers		10:00 AM	Worship
	10:00 AM	Worship		12:00 PM	Brunch Trackside Grill
		Multi-generational worship	September 21	2:00 PM	Carlyle House Service
September 9	6:30 PM	Movie Night – Fireproof		5:00 PM	International Day of Peace Celebration
September 11	CANS FOR COMMUNION			7:30 PM	Stewards meeting
	9:00 AM	Singers	September 24	11:00 AM	Moving Planet Day
	10:00 AM	Worship	September 25	9:00 AM	Singers
	7:30 PM	Interfaith Service to Commemorate 10th Anniversary of September 11 First United Methodist		10:00 AM	Worship
			September 28	10:00 AM	Book Club

Deacons

"We could learn a lot from crayons. Some are sharp, some are pretty and some are dull. Some have weird names and all are different colors, but they all have to live in the same box." -Unknown

People of Grace,

There are two days in every week about which we shouldn't worry. One is yesterday, with its mistakes and cares, its aches and pains. Yesterday has passed forever beyond our control. The other day is tomorrow, with its possible adversities and blunders. Until its sun rises, we have no stake in tomorrow, for it is yet unborn. That leaves us with only one day — today. Anyone can fight the battle of just one day. It is only when we add the burden of those two eternities — yesterday and tomorrow — that contentment will escape us. How is today going for you? Are you finding time to be open to

the presence of God in your life? You are never alone.

Soon, the days will be cooler, school begins, trees and plants will be getting their fall colors ready, Rally Day will be upon us. How was your summer? Did you find time for renewal? Did you experience physical and mental refreshment? Did you make memorable memories? We would love to hear about your summer experiences! Remember it is important to take some time to replenish yourself even if it is only a few minutes each day.

Please plan on attending church on September 11th. Pastor Brad is planning a service recognizing the anniversary of 9/11. There will be many commemoratives taking place in our community — some you will hear about in worship and some you will see in the newspapers and other media.

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

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.

Leadership Update

and there was consensus that those designs were out of our price range at this time.

Janez Design is now working on some more modestly-priced design concepts that the Leadership Ministry Team hopes to see and discuss this week. We plan to have congregational conversations that relate to the options for larger space beginning in September. Dates will be announced in worship and through the Thursday E-mail.

In a parallel effort, the Leadership Ministry Team also had a discussion with Margery Williams, capital campaign consultant for the MACUCC, to get some basic information about

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how we might proceed with a capital campaign. She validated the approach of determining the feasibility of the capital project, as we are currently doing with Janez Design. She also offered several nuggets of wisdom, including reminding us that a strong capital campaign rests on the shoulders of a strong annual giving campaign.

With that in mind, the Leadership Team has decided to proceed with an active annual stewardship campaign. We intend that our whole congregation will engage in learning and telling how giving is part of our spiritual life as well as part of our financial commitment to Grace

Church. Do you feel you have the gifts of leadership and the passion for Grace Church that would make you a good leader for this year's campaign? The Leadership Ministry Team will fully support you! Please contact Linda Dunbrack or Pastor Brad to pursue this opportunity.

Linda Dunbrack

Grace Women United will meet on Wed, 9/14. Bring lunch and any ideas for the coming year.

Book Club will meet on Wed 9/28. at 10AM. We will discuss the books that each of us read over the summer.

Stewards

By the time this issue goes to print, all of the carpeting in the church will have been shampooed; the students from FSU will begin using their assigned spots in our parking lot; and, given that Labor Day week end signals the beginning of fall, we will again see many of those we have missed during the summer. Hopefully, we will all be rested and ready to resume a busy schedule.

• **GOOD NEWS:** 1. Hurricane Irene didn't cause Grace Church any damage. 2. The huge water main break at the mouth of our driveway just prior to Irene didn't cause us any damage either! *Jean Burr*

Christian Education

Sunday School is Back!

Grace Church Sunday School is about to return from a summer hiatus. We will continue to celebrate multi-generational worship on the first Sunday of the month so no Sunday School on those days. For the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th Sundays of the month, teachers and students will come to worship at 10:00 AM and stay for about the first half hour. So, the first half hour of each worship service will, like the first Sunday, be intentionally geared for our whole community, with all its varied ages. Then, on the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th Sundays of the month, the teachers and students will depart part way through the service and get busy

in Sunday School.

We have strong teachers lined up to anchor the Sunday School classes this year. We also are going to invite other adults to come to Sunday School to assist. We intend this invitation to be accepted, so what Sunday will you assist? We want to make more opportunities for adults who do not regularly teach Sunday School to interact with the younger members of our congregation. Also, we require of ourselves that we have at least two adults in the classroom. Look for your chance to sign-up on Sundays!

Missions

Fall with Stearns Farm

We continue to enjoy our membership in Stearns Farm this year. You are welcome to sign up for produce pick-up at Stearns Farm on any Friday in September or October, or help with food pantry delivery on Saturday mornings – see the sign-up sheet on the bulletin board, or speak to Mary Memmott. If you are especially interested in cutting flowers for the altar, that can also be arranged at your convenience, as the flower garden at Stearns continues through the fall. Most of the produce we collect will be shared with the pantry and the rest will come back to Grace for all to enjoy and share. You never know when you might see some squash at church! Also look for upcoming announcements about a fall work day on a Saturday in Octo-

ber – just a 2-hour commitment guarantees you fresh air and a delicious “stone soup” lunch – a fine way to mark the season.

Cans for Communion – Sept. 4th and 11th – Back-to-School Can Drive

This month the food pantry has especially requested: CANNED VEGETABLES, TUNA, and SOUP. 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. If you would like to sign up to deliver this month's collection, please see Mary Memmott or sign up in the fellowship hall. Thank you for your continued support of the Framingham “Hope” Food Pantry!

“Moving Planet – Towards a Solar Framingham” – Sat., Sept. 24th, 11 a.m.-1 p.m. (Light lunch provided.)

Join us at Edwards Church, Framingham, for an informative presentation on solar power (just up the hill from a large solar installation at the Saxonville Mills by Solar Flair). Activities for the kids while we meet; light lunch provided, although you are welcome to bring a dessert to share. Sponsored by Earthcare Framingham and the Framingham Sierra Club. See <http://www.moving-planet.org/> for more information on the world-wide “Moving Planet” Day. Those who wish can car-pool from Edwards to attend an interfaith service and rally in Boston that afternoon as part of this world-wide rally to demand solutions to the climate crisis.

Mary Memmott

Peace Celebrations

Please mark your calendars to attend one or more of the events responding to the 10th anniversary of the attacks of September 11, 2001. Here are two events, one to help us never forget and yet do more than grieve and the other to rally our spirits and actions to work for peace in Framingham and all parts of the world.

Interfaith Service to Commemorate 10th Anniversary of September 11, 2001

A time of remembering, honoring, seeking, blessing.

Sunday September 11 at 7:30 PM
First United Methodist Church

International Day of Peace

Wednesday September 21 beginning at 5:00 PM

5-5:30 – Introductions by Rev Mary Francis other FICA members and those who made Peace Doves

(Yes! Grace Church will be making a peace dove!)

5:30-6 – Peace Parade with posters and peace doves around the village green with musical accompaniment

6-8 – 4 sets of live music

8 – candle-lighting/lanterns

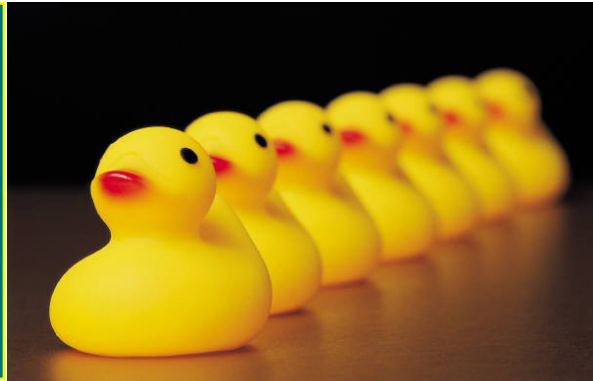
8:30 – candlelight interfaith intentions/prayers for peace

9 – end and clean-up

Vendors: kettle corn, lemonade, cannolis, donated foods

Activities: labyrinth walk, peace wall, world map for peaceful intentions, face painting, and more

**Get All Your Ducks
in a Row
(Maintain Your
Independence)**



How Did I Become a Senior and What Should I Do About It?

October 29, 2011

**9:30 to 11:30 AM (followed by lunch)
(9:00 - Registration)**

Admission is free; reservations required

Grace Church is hosting a unique Life Care Planning panel for seniors (and offspring).

The panelists will be discussing services available to seniors, what options there are and what circumstances would warrant the need for these services.

Our panelists are:

- Sally Kaitz - Geriatric Care Manager
- Tracey Ingle - Life Care Planning
- Michelle Perry - Hospice 101
- Marie LeBlanc - Moving or Downsizing