

SHARING THE LIGHT

Monthly Newsletter of the
CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF GRAFTON, UCC
Worship and Sunday School at 10 a.m.



Volume 6, Number 1

JANUARY 2024 EDITION

Dear friends and members of our Congregational Church of Grafton:

Lists. Those series of words or names or items—written or printed or imagined—that feature one after another after another...of whatever is being listed.

Lists. They may organize us, inspire us, remind us, dare us, annoy us, frustrate us, and haunt us.

Lists. Ultimately our lists define who we are. The lists that we maintain—on our phones, in our computers, on random pieces of paper—identify who is important to us and what is essential to us.

Think about it: Who was on your Christmas gift list? What is on your “bucket list” of activities to do before your expiration date? Who is on your to-call-in-the-event-of-emergency list?

In 1977, David Wallenchinsky published the first of several best-selling *Book of Lists*. Each of his *Book of Lists* contains hundreds of lists of unique, obscure and outright bizarre topics. The first edition of Wallenchinsky's book lists:

1. Most dangerous places in the world to hitchhike
2. Ten worst song titles of all time
3. Breeds of dogs that bite people the most...and that bite people the least

In Holy Scripture, the Old Testament records hundreds of lists: of God-issued Commandments; of purification rites; of sacrificial specifications. In the New Testament, Jesus of Nazareth tells more stories than he declares lists. In his epistles, the Apostle Paul is prone to iterate lists, as with his list of the fruits of the spirit: *Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.* (Galatians 5:22-23)

In the New Year, some may make a list of New Year resolutions of how they aspire to live differently in the New Year. Most, however, do not undertake such a personal mission.

Even so, may you consider this list of “A Dozen To-Do's for the New Year”:

1. To accept gifts and appreciate them
2. To give gifts and forget that you gave them
3. To thank God for sharing miracles with you
4. To choose to feel joy—whether in smile, a sunrise or a rainbow
5. To listen and to tell
6. To laugh heartily and to weep deeply
7. To think and to ponder
8. To study and to improve
9. To initiate and to change
10. To stand up after being pushed down
11. To learn when to walk in and when to walk away
12. To be fearless

A lofty list? Perhaps. A plausible list? Definitely.

Select one or two from the list. Or six. Or even all twelve.

Print off this list. Keep it handy—in your phone, on a refrigerator, or in a Bible you read daily.

Some cannot live with a list. Some cannot live without a list.

May you live by this list. A new list for the New Year.



Shove from the Dove

In the journey of faith,
Rev. Dr. Barbara Therese

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Rev. Dr. Barbara Therese, Minister

Kristen Graham, Administrative Assistant, Editor

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Kayson Jones, Minister of Faith-Building

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***To Thank and To Remember:
Gratitude for Pastoral Gift***

*Whatever kindness we may do, whatever goodness we may share,
let us do it now,
for we may never pass this way again. (Jim Seals and Darrell Crofts)*

Greetings of gratitude to friends and members of the faith community:

For the kind words, kind actions and kind gestures to your pastor this past year, I thank you deeply. For the Pastoral Gift this past Christmas, I thank you for your kind generosity.

Gratitude is the heart's memory. My heart remembers the kindness shown to me, and my spirit recalls the generosity shared with me.

Above all, thank you for sharing your personal stories of faith as together we travel on our individual, yet intersecting, journeys of faith.

***Faithfully and gratefully,
Rev. Dr. Barbara Therese***

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***To Remember and To Thank:
“In Memoriam Sunday” on January 21, 2024***

In the month of January, throughout the past four years, the faith community of the Congregational Church of Grafton has honored a “newer” tradition: To remember and to give thanks for the lives of church members and friends who passed from this life to greater life in the preceding calendar year.

This sacred event of remembrance and thanksgiving—called “In Memoriam Sunday”—will again be conducted on Sunday, January 21, 2024, at 10 a.m. in the sanctuary.

This month, “In Memoriam Sunday” will remember and give thanks for the lives and love of:

***Nancy Collins (mother of Julie Capuzziello)
Rosemarie MacCallum
Barbara Bryant***

On “In Memoriam Sunday,” all members and friends of the faith community are invited to attend and to share their comforting support with the families and extended families of those who will be honored that morning.

Bring your presence and your hearts to “In Memoriam Sunday,” January 21, at 10 a.m.



ANNUAL
MEETING

Important Announcement
-
Annual Congregational Meeting

* * *

DRAFT-WARRANT

**TO THE MEMBERS OF THE
CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF GRAFTON, MASSACHUSETTS:**

The members are hereby notified that on Sunday, February 11, 2024, at 11:30 a.m. via virtual meeting (with information to join such meeting to be provided at least one week prior), the Annual Meeting of the Congregation will be held to vote on the following articles:

Vote to accept the 2023 Church Annual Report

Election of Church Officers

Vote to accept the 2024 Church Budget

Adjournment

A quorum of 25 members is required.

Respectfully posted by:

The Cabinet of the Church

Robert Lane, Church Moderator
Elizabeth Torres, Church Treasurer



Attention Church Committee Chairs:

All Annual Reports are due into the church office no later than January 18, 2024.

Holy Happenings in January!

*Opportunities to deepen one's faith
on Sunday mornings at 10 a.m.*

Connect online at: [facebook.com/UCCGrafton/](https://www.facebook.com/UCCGrafton/)

January 7 = Pajama Sunday and Prayers around the World – Sermon #1

Message: *Now I Lay Me down to Sleep*

Wear your pajamas to church and
join us for a Message on a familiar bedtime prayer--
the first of a four-sermon series on “Prayers around the World.”

Our monthly Sharing-the-Light Food Collection
expands to welcome soup donations
for our six-week Souper Bowl Canned Soup Collection
to benefit the Grafton Food Bank.

As well, we celebrate the Feast for All (aka the Lord's Supper).

* * *

January 14 = Caribbean Worship Sunday

Theme: *My God Is... - Part #1*

Join us for a Spirit-filled worship experience,
planned and offered by Mr. Kayson Jones
(Minister of Faith-Building and a seminarian from Jamaica),
that will embrace the music, rhythm and spontaneity
inherent to faith communities in the Caribbean.

The Message—the first of the new thematic series in 2024—will feature
a selected understanding of The Divine.

* * *

January 21 = “In Memoriam Sunday” and Prayers around the World – Sermon #2

Message: *Grant That I May Be an Instrument*

Join us for a time of remembrance and thanksgiving
for three church members and friends who passed away in 2023.
The prayerful words—*Grant that I may be an instrument of your peace--*
will guide the “In Memoriam” service.

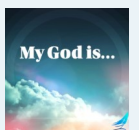
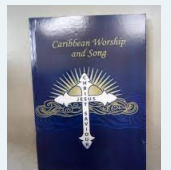
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January 28 = Divinity Sunday

Theme: *My God Is... - Part 2*

Join us for the second “My God Is...” Message,
presented by Mr. Kayson Jones,
to expand and challenge
one's relationship with The Divine.

NOTE: On this Sunday, Rev. Barbara and the ***F.A.C.E. Group***
will worship with the Mennonite Church in Mendon, MA.



F.A.C.E. Group Has Re-Emerged at CCG!

During December 2023, did anyone observe the re-emergence of a Youth Group at the Congregational Church of Grafton (CCG)?

If so, you are observant! ***F.A.C.E. Group*** has re-emerged after a Pandemic-shortened program in 2019, which resumed on YOUTH*SPEAK Sundays in late 2020 and early 2021, and which culminated on Confirmation Sunday on August 1, 2021.

Re-introducing ***F.A.C.E. Group!***

Q: What is ***F.A.C.E. Group***?

A: ***F.A.C.E. Group*** stands for--

F aith

A nd

C aring

E ncounter

Group

F.A.C.E. Group is a four-month faith-formation opportunity for young people in our family of faith to--

1. Experience worship in our own faith community and in other faith communities
2. Engage in local mission projects

Q: Activities of the ***F.A.C.E. Group***?

A: ***F.A.C.E. Group*** members will--

Experience these worship events:

1. Advent and Christmas Eve services within our faith community in December 2023
2. Caribbean Church experience in our sanctuary on January 14, 2024
3. Mennonite church service in Mendon, MA on January 28, 2024
4. Spirit-filled worship service at Voices of God Ministry on February 25, 2024
5. Friday evening Shabbat service at Beth Kitvah in March 2024

Engage in these local mission projects:

1. Deliver Christmas Wish List gift bags to Crescent Manor Home in December 2023
2. Participate in Souper Bowl Canned Soup Collection in January and February 2024
3. Visit the Grafton Food Bank on February 29, 2024

Q: Dates for the ***F.A.C.E. Group*** activities?

A: ***F.A.C.E. Group*** activities began on the first Sunday of Advent, December 3, 2023, and will conclude with a Service of Confirmation on Palm Sunday, March 24, 2024, in our sanctuary.

Q: Who is leading and facilitating the ***F.A.C.E. Group*** program?

A: Rev. Barbara is organizing, leading and facilitating all ***F.A.C.E. Group*** events. She is assisted by Christian Education Committee representatives as well as by family members of the participants.

*Prayerful support from church friends and members is valued
as the young people of our community grow in their faith and in their capacity to care!*

* * * * *

Sharing the Light → Souper Bowl Canned Soup Collection

The miracle is this: The more we share, the more we have.

During the first six weeks of the New Year (January 1 through February 14, 2024), friends and members of the Congregational Church of Grafton are invited to continue their support of the mission of the Grafton Food Bank but with a minor shift.

Sharing-the-Light Food Collection

will temporarily transform into

Souper Bowl Canned Soup Collection

From early January to mid-February, please bring donations of canned soup to the Sharing-the-Light Food Collection on Sunday mornings (January 7 and February 4) and to the Grafton Food Bank Collection Basket in the church kitchen on weekdays (January 1 through February 14).

Goal for this year's Souper Bowl Canned Soup Collection? 400 cans of soup!

*There is no joy in possession without sharing!
Bless you for your generosity to the Souper Bowl Canned Soup Collection!*

* * * * *



Yummy Snacks Needed for Our Fellowship Time after the Service!

There will be a Signup Sheet available at Coffee Hour.

A Deacon will make the coffee.

Please bring the following: A yummy snack (think muffins, pastry, breads, fruit, cookies) to share with everyone, a small carton of **half & half** and a small container of **juice** or some individual **juice boxes**.

Please arrive 10-15 minutes prior to the worship service to help set up the snack table. Then go downstairs about 5 minutes before the service ends to unwrap snacks, put out any refrigerated items and serve cups of coffee.

A Deacon is happy to help you.

THANK YOU SO MUCH!

Questions? Contact Lorraine Swanson (swanmom924@gmail.com)



**GRAFTON THRIFT SHOP
VOLUNTEERS FOR JANUARY 2024**

Shop Hours: Thursdays, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.; Saturdays, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Thursday - 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Jan.	4	Joanne Hable 11 a.m. - 1 p.m.
		Lorraine Swanson 1 p.m. - 3 p.m.
	11	Joanne Hable 11 a.m. - 1 p.m.
		Lorraine Swanson 1 p.m. - 3 p.m.
	18	Melanie Peppard
	25	April Lane 11 a.m. - 1 p.m.
		Lynne Flanagan-Tsombakos 1 p.m. - 3 p.m.

Saturday - 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Jan.	6	April Lane 11 a.m. - 1 p.m.
		Joanne Hable 1 p.m. - 3 p.m.
	13	Diane Lalone
	20	Susan Filippone
	27	Lynne Flanagan-Tsombakos 11 a.m. - 1 p.m.
		Joanne Hable 1 p.m. - 3 p.m.

Thank you to everyone who supported the Grafton Thrift Shop in 2023 as a customer or donor or both! 2023 was a success and we look forward to serving the community in 2024!

BAG SALE! Our clothing racks are full! So it's time for an early-winter Bag Sale! Stop in to the Grafton Thrift Shop from January 4 through January 13 and purchase a large brown bag filled with clothes for \$10. All women's, men's and children's clothes are included.

Are you looking for a volunteer opportunity to help with our church's mission and the community? The Thrift Shop is seeking new volunteers who may help on Tuesday mornings to sort through donations or to work in the shop for 2 or 4 hours on Thursdays or Saturdays, once or twice a month. Please contact April Lane at aprild5850@yahoo.com or at 508-839-5850 (home) or 508-596-8582 (cell).

Donations are accepted only during Shop hours on Thursdays and Saturdays, from 11 a.m. - 3 p.m. If you have any questions about the Shop or donating, please contact April Lane at aprild5850@yahoo.com or at 508-839-5850 (home) or 508-596-8582 (cell).



January Birthdays

Kelly Howell	1/2	Gabrielle McLean	1/3	Lynne Flanagan-Tsombakos	1/4
Alison Balfour	1/5	Junya Awata	1/7	Brady Keeler	1/8
Donna Blanchard	1/11	Joey Drew	1/20	Sam Capuzziello	1/26
		Ayla LeMaire	1/29		



CARE AND CONCERN CIRCLE *January 2024*

Join the Care and Concern Circle by keeping these people in your prayers now and throughout your week.

If you have a special request for prayer that you want listed in the Care & Concern Circle, please call the church office: 508-839-4513. Your prayer request may be included in the PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE during our online worship service on Sunday mornings.

We pray for recovery, well-being and comfort for:

- | | | |
|--------------------------------|---------|------------------|
| Uncle Than | Nathan | Linda |
| Kelli M. | Mike | Donald and Vidia |
| Bruce | Tony P. | Jen K. |
| Louise | Paul V. | Uncle Peter |
| Tim M. | Mary S. | June |
| All Jewish people in the world | | Steven |



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<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCD6O7WxciXwlnx1Ho1GVngg/videos>

<https://twitter.com/GraftonUCC>

<https://www.instagram.com/graftonucc/>

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PLACE
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January

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WORSHIP SERVICES: SUNDAYS, 10 a.m.