

SHARING THE LIGHT

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



Volume 7, Number 9

SEPTEMBER 2025 EDITION

Splintered Wood

By Bob Thompson - published on April 25, 2022

Our town's beautiful wooden arches, 60 feet tall and spanning 178 feet, splintered and crumpled on to the overpass just after midnight on February 18, 2022, less than a year after they were installed. No one was physically hurt, but our collective pride suffered a deep wound.

The arches were to be our small town's facsimile of the St. Louis Gateway. The most visible icon of our \$14 million City Walk, the arches connected the lake to downtown to the university. The layered wooden beams were designed to reflect our municipal motto: *Life. Well crafted.*

The arches weren't well crafted. Dawn exposed 40 tons of pick-up sticks. Reactions to the collapse ranged from sadness to glee, blaming to gloating, accusation to defensiveness. And frustration - if not at the collapse, then at the blaming, gloating, accusation, and defensiveness.

The following Sunday morning, John 8 was the text in worship - the story of a woman caught in the act of adultery and forced to stand before Jesus at dawn in the temple courts. I mused aloud that the arches should remain where they fell, or better yet, be moved to our church's front lawn.

The disfigured pile might exhibit what a church actually is. We prefer to see our selves represented by our tall steeple, granite veneer, and manicured lawn. If we are brutally honest, we are a community of splintered wood.

Whether or not we own it, we are both the Pharisees and the woman they snared. We are offenders *and* accusers, abusers *and* victims, self-righteous *and* self-condemned. Only by the love of God are we being changed. Only by the grace of Christ do we find dignity and possibility. Only by the power of the Spirit are we able to stay in close enough proximity to let mercy transform us. Thanks be to God for the communion of the saints.

Prayer

God, who am I today? Unloved or unloving? Don't give up on me. Jesus, remind me of your grace that has welcomed and forgiven me. Spirit, make me a channel that pays it forward. Amen.

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Lacey's Lunchbox

Community Pet Pantry

Located outside the office door

Please take what you need and leave
what you can.



Women's Retreat!

Friday, October 31 - Sunday, November 2, 2025

NEW LOCATION!

(Framingham site not available this year)

[Silver Lake Camp and Retreat Center](#)

Sharon, CT

Cost per person will be \$225 which includes 4 meals (3 on
Saturday and Sunday brunch), and lodging.

More details to follow - **MARK YOUR CALENDARS NOW!**

Contact Connie, Betty or Kathy with any questions.



CHURCH CARE GROUP

The Membership Committee has organized a Church Care Group
to keep us all connected with our church family. Please contact Lorraine Swanson if you know
someone in need of a card.

Whether it's wishes for a speedy recovery, a thank you, words of encouragement, miss you,
or congratulations, who doesn't like receiving a caring card in the mail?

swanmom924@gmail.com 508-887-6214

Together we are the church. Let's take care of one another!



MISSION OUTREACH NEWS

GRAFTON FOOD BANK - MONTHLY COLLECTION

Please think of our neighbors who are food-insecure when you shop this month, and place your items in one of the Food Baskets located in the church (as you enter the Sanctuary, by the thrift Shop door, or in the Fellowship Hall).

Donated items will be brought to the Food Bank each month.

NEWS FROM WAMS

Donations of Diapers, Wipes, and Feminine Pads

The Worcester Area Mission Society (WAMS) continues to accept donations of diapers, wipes, and feminine hygiene pads for their new migrant neighbors living in area shelters.

There is a donation bin in the church kitchen marked for WAMS:

- Diapers (sizes 4, 5, 6 are most needed)
- Baby wipes
- Feminine hygiene pads

THURSDAY CAFÉ BAGGED LUNCHES

Worcester Fellowship resumes their Thursday Café this month. Every Thursday, from September to May, they reach out to homeless and at-risk adults to nurture community and provide pastoral care by providing a free hot meal, a place to relax and socialize, and a bagged lunch to take with them. Our church has signed up to prepare and donate the bagged lunches on the third Thursday of each month. The first date is September 18th. Volunteers are needed to donate food items, help make the sandwiches, and pack the items in the bags. Watch for a Sign-Up coming soon!

Many thanks and blessings to you!

The Mission Outreach Group, Fellowship & Service Team
Sue Howell, Barbara Gow, Donna Caracino



The 46th Annual Harvest Fair and Apple Pie Social is Sunday, September 28, 2025 from 11:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

The Harvest Fair Committee is hard at work to make this the best Harvest Fair ever! Please reach out to one of the Committee members listed below to help us with the preparations. A Sign-up Genius will come out soon for volunteer opportunities on the Fair Day itself.

The fair is an awesome way to Celebrate, Connect, Affirm and Share our faith with our Community. Please join us!

- Homemade apple pies and crisps
- Burgers and hot dogs, meatball subs, beverages
- A huge yard sale
- Raffles (see related article)
- Kids' games and toys
- Books
- Live music: Kelly Clark's Jazz Band, Alison Balfour, Gabe Cain

We are in need of donations of yard sale items, books, toys, games. Please bring all items to the basement of the church.

Thank you!

Sue Howell (suchow6oak@aol.com), Joanne Hable (jnhable49@live.com), Connie Hopkins (cmhopkins1@verizon.net), Barbara Gow (barbaragow23@gmail.com), Lorraine Swanson (swanmom924@gmail.com), Kathy Vandenengel (momv17@yahoo.com).

Come Join Our Apple Pie Workshops!

We need YOUR help to peel and chop apples, roll out dough and assemble the pies and crisps. We always have fun! Please bring pie crust (recipe in weekly newsletter) and a paring knife.

Monday, September 15 from 7-9 p.m.

Sunday, September 21 from 1-3 p.m.

Monday September 22 from 7-9 p.m.

Watch for upcoming details in your inboxes.



Raffle Baskets

Time to start thinking about putting together a raffle basket for our Harvest Fair! Please let Lorraine Swanson know if you may donate a filled basket and what the theme is (swanmom924@gmail.com or 508-887-6214). **Please note earlier deadline this year - bring all items and baskets in by September 21 if at all possible!**

Theme basket ideas:

“Italian” - Foods, pasta, wine, colander, biscotti, pizzelles

“Relax” - Wine, glasses, snacks, book

“For the Kids” - Toys, books, puzzles

“For the Crafter” - Arts and craft supplies

“Autumn” - Fall decorations

“Furry Friends” - Cat or dog toys, treats, food

“Date Night” - Wine, chocolates, gift card to restaurant

“Self-Care” - Lotions, candle, CD, skin care, soaps, book

“Sports Fan” - Anything sports-related

“Movie Night” - Drinks, popcorn, candy, DVD

“Kitchen” - Gadgets, dish towels, frypan, cookbook

“Laundry” - Basket, detergent, dryer sheets, set of towels

If you are able, please wrap your entire basket in CLEAR cellophane gift wrap and tie with ribbon on top. (An elastic band with a bow added works, too!) Thank you so much for supporting our church’s Harvest Fair!



Sundae Sunday

Labor Day is almost here and you know what comes next! It’s our Sundae Sunday after church in the Fellowship Hall on September 7. The Membership Committee is sponsoring a “Make Your Own Sundae” with all the toppings. This event is always enjoyed by all, so please plan to join us and bring your friends. All are welcome!

Please sign up via the link in the weekly newsletter to bring supplies!



GRAFTON THRIFT SHOP

VOLUNTEERS FOR SEPTEMBER 2025

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.

Sep.	4	April Lane
	11	Joanne Hable 11 a.m. - 1 p.m. Lorraine Swanson 1 p.m. - 3 p.m.
	18	Joanne Hable 11 a.m. - 1 p.m. Lorraine Swanson 1 p.m. - 3 p.m.
	25	Melanie Peppard

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

Sep.	6	Amy Coldwell
	13	Diane Lalone
	20	April Lane
	27	Lynne Flanagan-Tsombakos 11 a.m. - 1 p.m. April Lane 1 p.m. - 3 p.m.

Sunday - 11 a.m. - 3 p.m. (HARVEST FAIR)

Sep.	28	Lynne Flanagan-Tsombakos Susan Filippone
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Prepare your wardrobe for the crisp autumn air! You'll find a fantastic selection of fall clothing arriving at the Thrift Shop in the first week of September. The shop will be open during the Harvest Fair on September 28 from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

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 would like to help out 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 at 508-596-8582 (cell).



September Birthdays

Anne Koskinen	9/2	Andy Deschenes	9/3	Lorrie Picotte	9/3
Julie Capuzziello	9/14	Jon Filippone	9/19	Meghan Foucher	9/22
Robert Lane	9/24	Lorraine Swanson	9/24	Amy Koskinen	9/29



CARE AND CONCERN CIRCLE

September 2025

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

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

Steven	Gary	Adam
Donald and Vidia	Nicole	Alfred
A friend in need	Penny	Greg
A young adult struggling with a serious health issue		
A son struggling with his mental health		
Prayers of joy - Rev. Bert visiting his 5 yr. old grandson		
Two daughters mourning the loss of their father		
The family of Barbara's nephew		



<https://www.facebook.com/UCCGrafton/>

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

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