

SHARING THE LIGHT

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



Volume 2, Number 5

JUNE 2020 EDITION

Dear members and friends of our Congregational Church of Grafton:

Gain wisdom; gain insight. Remember both. (Proverbs 4:5)

What a bold new world we inhabit!

As we live forward into our new month of June, may we pause and look back on our last two months of “living differently.”

What wisdom have we gained?

What insights have we acquired?

What lessons have we learned...that we may apply as we live forward?

Sunita Williams, a NASA astronaut, offers wisdom from her 322 days orbiting Earth. A veteran of NASA expeditions 14, 15, 32 and 33, Sunita recently stood in the middle of a street in her neighborhood of Houston, TX, leading children—who were wisely spread out on their own front lawns--in an exercise regimen. “And one and two and three and four...” Push-ups, sit-ups and jumping jacks. It was a make-shift Gym Class in our season of COVID-19.

Currently Sunita is training to fly the Boeing CST-100 *Starliner* spacecraft for NASA. Of necessity, her training is virtual. Like most residents of our 50 States, she works from her home. However, her extraterrestrial missions have uniquely prepared her to stay-at-home and to be safer-at-home.

The following are among Sunita's wise insights as we navigate our bold new world:

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Be considerate

When we are in space with the same few people, we need to learn about them and work with them. If I open up a food container and there is one serving of lasagna, I think, “My crew-mate loves lasagna. So, I won't eat it.” Being caring is vital during our space missions.

In your homes, apply that same care and respect.

Keep it clean

In space, we take many precautions to avoid becoming sick—including keeping the spacecraft extra-clean.

In your homes, cleanliness is extremely important. Clean daily, and deep-clean weekly. Be extra diligent around sinks where you wash your hands.

Self-isolate, as needed

Before each space launch, we are required to self-isolate for two weeks. This requirement is especially difficult for astronauts who have children. But we must ensure that all crew-mates are disease-free.

In your homes, self-isolation—when necessary—keeps you and your loved ones safe.

Be inventive in the kitchen

You will always want what you don't have! So, in space, I am creative. I may take some sweet Russian cheese and add re-hydrated strawberries. Each spoonful reminds me of my mother's strawberry cheesecake.

In your homes, open your cabinets, see what you have and invent something! Have fun while you are inventing, and you will stop craving the cheeseburger that you can't have.

Reach out to family and friends

In space, we always make time after dinner to call home and check in with our people on Earth.

In your homes, connect with those who are important to you. Whether by phone, Zoom, FaceTime or other technology—just do it. Being connected is as important for you as it is to the people you reach out to. (Continued on Pg. 2)

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Exercise!

In space, I completed a “triathlon” using resistance equipment for the swimming leg, the stationery bike for the cycling leg and the treadmill for the running leg.

In your homes, everyone needs to move—whether leading neighbor kids in calisthenics or going for a daily walk.

Say “I Love You”

By nature, I'm a hugger.

In your homes, you may hug those in your space but not outside your homes. So, find different ways of saying “I love you” every day.

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Sunita Williams' experiences in space and our own collective experiences in our homes may offer all of us abundant wisdom and insight to remember and to live by...in all seasons.

Who is wise among you?

*Show by your life that your works are done with gentleness,
born of wisdom. (James 3:13)*



A Shove from the Dove

Beside you in the journey of faith,

Rev. Dr. Barbara Therese



Letter of Gratitude to an Unknown Angel

Dear “Mask Fairy”:

What a kind and caring spirit you have!

Thank you so much for the surprise gift of hand-sewn and medical face masks left on the door nob of the Pastor's Office last month! Please know that your gifted masks have been genuine life-savers and health-preservers for this pastor!

In the oft-quoted Twelve Step inspirational piece, titled “Just for Today,” the fifth verse reads: “Just for today I will exercise my soul....I will do somebody a good turn and not get found out.”

May you be assured that you exercised your soul. You did this “somebody” a very good turn. And you did not “get found out.”

Whoever you are: I am deeply grateful to you and for you. You ministered to a minister.

Faithfully and gratefully,

Rev. Barbara

Holy Happenings in June!

*Faith-building events for our faith community
during Facebook Live Services
on Sunday mornings at 10 a.m.*

Connect with us at: facebook.com/UCCGrafton/

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June 7 = “Holy Trinity Sunday” and Feast for All

Sermon: *Less Confusion*

Are you confused by the concept of the “Holy Trinity”?

So are many believers, clergy and theologians!

For our monthly **Sharing-the-Light Food Collection**,

please see Page 4

for ways to support our local Grafton Food Bank.

For our monthly “**Feast for All**” (aka Holy Communion),

kindly assemble bits of bread and cups of juice

(or English muffins and orange juice!)

to consume during the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

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June 14 = “Baby Duckling Sunday”

Sermon: *The Kingdom of God Is Like...a Baby Duckling!*

In place of “Youth and Children Sunday,”

we honor how the kingdom of God

may be understood through baby duckling stories!

NOTE: Email your baby duckling stories

to Rev. Barbara by noon on June 10

so that your stories may be included

in this “community sermon”!

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June 21 = Father's Day

Sermon: *Dear Dad*

In this Father's Day card-message from our faith community,

we honor our individual fathers/father-figures

with expressions from friends and members

of our family of faith.

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June 28 = “Graduation Sunday”

Sermon: *Our Graduates Speak!*

We honor our graduates

from high school, college and doctoral and nursing programs

and cite their profound words to our world

in this moment in time.

Sharing-the-Light Food Collection

For our monthly Sharing-the-Light Food Collection,

please note these newest opportunities:

While the Grafton Municipal Center is temporarily closed,
the Grafton Food Bank may not
accept food donations at this time.

However, please visit the Food Bank's website: graftonfoodbank.org

Cash donations, using PayPal or GoFundMe are welcomed!

Likewise, donations by check may be made to:

Grafton Food Bank/Friends of Grafton, Inc.

P.O. Box 324

Grafton, MA 01519

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As well, to assist community members—in times such as these—Gift Cards to local grocery stores and supermarkets (Stop & Shop, Market 32 and Shaw's) may be purchased and directed to Rev. Barbara, who will ensure that they are distributed wisely and graciously.

***Helping others in need is not only a responsibility in life.
Helping others is what gives meaning to life.***



F.A.C.E. Group: Re-Emerging with Resilience

*The human capacity to be resilient is like bamboo--
far more flexible than you would believe at first glance.*

--Jodi Picoult

The members of our **F.A.C.E. Group** (**F**aith **A**nd **C**aring **E**ncounter Group) are evidence of this truth: *We are not what happens to us. We are what we choose to become.*

In June, **F.A.C.E. Group** members:

1. Will engage in the "Make Sense of Our Fence" Project to paint and restore our church's historic fence along Church Street.
2. Will reflect on the highlights and lowlights of their days while sheltering-at-home:
 - a. Occasions when they felt fearful;
 - b. Occasions when they felt safe;
 - c. Occasions when they observed acts of kindness.

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On a Sunday in early autumn, **F.A.C.E. Group** members will be invited to join the membership of our faith community.

Since November 2019, Rev. Barbara has organized and led the **F.A.C.E. Group** program. She is assisted by Christian Education Committee members and parents of **F.A.C.E. Group** members. Rev. Barbara and **F.A.C.E. Group** are grateful for our congregation's care, support and encouragement as they learn to be resilient in our season of change and challenge.

Sunday Online Worship Continues through the Summer

Dear family of faith:

Life is not measured in how fast we run,
or in how high we climb, but
in how well we bounce.

Our family of faith is blessed with a remarkable ability to bounce well.

Resilience is the capacity to maintain a core purpose and to sustain integrity in the face of dramatically changed circumstances.

Our family of faith exudes resilience.

While we have not gathered in-person within the walls of our sanctuary since mid-March, we nonetheless have gathered in-spirit around computer screens, on phone conversations, with drive-by parades, in caring emails, through thoughtful notes and with engaging letters.

While local government lifted some restrictions on churches in mid-May, the Conference Ministers of the Southern New England Conference (MA, CT and RI) of the United Church of Christ have advised all UCC churches to suspend in-person worship through the end of summer.

The newest government-mandated in-person restrictions for places of worship include:
NO choirs, musical ensembles, singing, Bibles or hymnals in pews, offering plates or baskets, exchange of Communion elements, physical exchanges of peace, Church School for children or youth or Time of Fellowship with shared beverages and refreshments.

- The latest government restrictions for in-person services at places of worship:
- limit attendance to 40% of the membership of the congregation;
 - require all attendees to wear face masks;
 - mandate wise-distancing of all those present; and
 - require a tracking system to be implemented in the event that, if a church attendee should test COVID-positive, then all those present at the service may be traced, contacted, tested and mandated to self-isolate.

Given the breadth of these restrictions, our congregation will continue to gather on Sundays at 10 a.m., via Facebook Live, with Time of Fellowship immediately following the Postlude, via Zoom.

May you share or continue to share with our family of faith on Sundays at 10 a.m.

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

Humankind has never made any material as resilient as the human spirit.

Beside you in the journey of faith and resilience,

Rev. Dr. Barbara Therese



***Windows 2020:
Our Stained-Glass Window Renewal Campaign***

***Eyes are the windows to the soul.
Our stained-glass windows are eyes to the soul of our church.***

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Our ***Windows 2020*** Campaign, which started in July 2019, faithfully continues in 2020. Bountiful thanks to all participants of our Campaign!

***To date, the Windows 2020 Campaign has received
total payments of \$25,657.
Total pledged support—through July 2020—is \$29,459.
Deep gratitude to all who have responded!***

In early March, workers from Stained Glass Resources, located in Hamden, MA, removed from our sanctuary the three stained-glass window panels identified for restoration. Since mid-March, skilled artisans at the stained-glass restoration factory have removed the cracked portions of the compromised windows.

In late March, COVID-related restrictions required that the factory reduce its working staff. Even so, the factory looks to return to full staff at the beginning of June and then resume the restoration work on our windows.

Completion date for our three-window restoration project is expected to be late August or early September. At that time, the window panels will be returned and re-installed in our sanctuary.

Meanwhile, your participation and pledges may still be made to our ***Windows 2020*** Campaign. Checks may be issued to:

Congregational Church of Grafton

P.O. Box 421

Grafton, MA 01519

Memo line: ***Windows 2020***

God's blessings to each of you for your commitment to preserve "the eyes to the soul of our church"!

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We congratulate all the graduates in our Church Family!

Matthew Torres is graduating from Grafton High School and will be attending Tufts University in the fall.

Olivia (Swanson) Mathieu is graduating from Mount Wachusett Community College with an Associates Degree in Nursing.

Colin Alexander Peacock graduated from the University of Massachusetts in Amherst.

Shelbe Turpin (granddaughter of Pam Hill) is graduating from Quinnipiac University with a Bachelors Degree in Nursing.

Kevin Roche is graduating from Grafton High School and will be attending the University of Massachusetts Amherst in the fall.

Emmerson Grace Cahill (granddaughter of Bill and Penny Cahill) is graduating from Grafton High School and will be attending the University of New England in Portland, Maine in the fall studying medical biology.





June Birthdays

George MacCallum 6/7

Ann Cranshaw 6/10

Ann Holm 6/16

Sherri Suhl 6/28



CARE AND CONCERN CIRCLE JUNE 2019

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 text Rev. Barbara on her cell phone: 860-705-7907. As well, 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:

Ron	James
Rick	Jean
Walt	Jennifer
Amanda	Donna
Mary	Fiona
Louise and George	Sara



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

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

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