

# SHARING THE LIGHT

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



Volume 7, Number 3

**MARCH 2025 EDITION**

## TRANSITION NEWS

### Thank You Reverend Barbara

As Reverend Barbara steps out onto a new path along her life's journey, we want to take time to thank her for her ministry to our church family. Her spirit and enthusiasm will be remembered, and we thank her for her outreach to the community. We wish you well, Reverend Barbara. May many blessings follow you.

### Pastor Search Update

**Rev. John Shaw** will be with us from March 1 until April 30. He lives in Southbridge where he was a Middle School social studies and science teacher for 25 years. After attending Andover Newton, he was ordained (Rev. Duane Brown preached at his ordination!) and has since served in Pulpit Supply and Interim positions. He has Grafton connections - serving as Pulpit Supply in our church and as an interim minister for the Baptist church.

**Rev. Bert Cote** will begin in May 1 and will be our bridge minister until we find an Interim or Settled pastor - or until Christmas time, after which he will return to sunny Florida! Pastor Bert lives in Walpole for 9 months of the year. He worked as a baker until 2019, at which time he retired to pursue a second career in the Ministry. He has served as a chaplain as well as a bridge minister.

Both pastors are contracted to prepare and lead Sunday worship services, as well as for Pastoral Care as needed and requested.

### Pastor Search Team to be Formed

Work has started on the Interim Profile. It will be used in two ways: (1) posting on the UCC website to attract an interim pastor and (2) serving as the basis for the more detailed profile needed to hire a Settled Pastor.

We have identified the qualities we think will be important for the success of the Team.

- Strong leadership skills
- Organizational skills
- Writing skills
- Listening skills
- Historic/current knowledge of our church
- Spiritual

With these qualities in mind, we will be inviting people to join the Pastor Search Team and considering anyone who says they are interested in serving. If you are interested, please contact one of us!

### With Faith and Hope,

Joanne Hable - [jnhable49@live.com](mailto:jnhable49@live.com) (508-614-5309)

Sue Howell - [suehow6oak@aol.com](mailto:suehow6oak@aol.com) (508-596-7366)

Lorraine Swanson - [swanmom924@gmail.com](mailto:swanmom924@gmail.com) (508-887-6214)

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### *Update from the Capital Campaign Steering Committee*

Since our \$120,000 successful request for funds in 2024 and successful \$50,000 church capital campaign in the same year, the church engaged the services of a carpentry subcontractor (through the painting company). The goal was to review the existing conditions of the church and to provide a more detailed and accurate quote for any restoration or repair work.

The church paid for a high-reach lift to access the exterior of the steeple. The carpenter observed more carpentry work area, as well as other areas of the main section of the church, that required repair and replacement. All of the anticipated additional budget costs relate to the restoration of the old part of the building.

Due to an estimated \$100,000 in increased carpentry costs, the Steering Committee needs to extend our church and community Capital Campaign into 2025. Letters have been mailed to church members and friends that kindly request their support with a goal of raising \$25,000.

In addition, we have nearly completed a \$70,000 application for funding from the Grafton Community Preservation Committee due February 1. We are confident the project will begin (and hopefully end!) construction this year. The project will address necessary safety repairs to the front granite entrance and walkway, exterior paneling repair as needed, and painting of the entire church exterior.



**“STICKY NOTES” CONVERSATION  
SUNDAY MARCH 16  
Right after the church service**

The Nominating Team is hosting a conversation to brainstorm with everyone and get thoughts for what we all would like to see moving forward towards finding our next settled pastor.

What do you love about our church? What new ideas do you have? We want your thoughts on music, worship, fellowship activities, mission projects, faith building ideas, youth projects and more. We will write ideas on “sticky notes” and put them into categories.

**WE NEED YOU THERE...BRING YOUR IDEAS AND YOUR VOICE!**



**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](mailto:swanmom924@gmail.com) 508-887-6214

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



**Y.E.S. (Youth Engaged In Service)**  
INVITES YOU TO  
**HELP US PACK!**

SUNDAY, MARCH 2 \* 5:30-7:00 PM

**JOIN US!**

**NEIGHBORS HELPING NEIGHBORS!**

**SIGN UP BELOW** TO PURCHASE ITEMS, THEN GATHER TOGETHER TO HELP PACK TOILETRY KITS FOR FAMILIES RESIDING IN THE WORCESTER AREA SHELTERS RUN BY CMHA (CENTRAL MASS HOUSING ALLIANCE).

Fellowship Hall

Scan to Sign Up!

Come join us to pack the kits, say a prayer, sing a song, play "Gaga", and have pizza, fun, & fellowship! All are welcome, especially children and youth!

graftonucc@gmail.com

Please sign up to donate items needed (see link in weekly newsletter.) We are hoping to make at least 25 kits. Please place all donated supplies in the labeled box in the church kitchen, or bring them with you to the March 2 event, no later than 5:00 p.m.

**Our next Thursday Café is March 20 - watch for signup coming soon!**

Thanks and blessings to all,

The Mission Outreach Committee  
Barbara Gow, Sue Howell, Donna Caracino



**POTLUCK**  
**MARCH 30**

Right after the church service

The Membership Group will host a Potluck so we can gather together, share amazing food, and hear from the Nominating Team about the results from the "Sticky Notes" Conversation. How can we accomplish some of these ideas?

Who wants to volunteer for an idea or activity? Can you lead a book discussion? Or coordinate a collection to benefit a mission activity? Or plan a family friendly event?

Look for a food signup for the potluck coming soon!



## GRAFTON THRIFT SHOP

### VOLUNTEERS FOR MARCH 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.

Mar.	6	Joanne Hable 11 am - 1 pm Lorraine Swanson 1 pm - 3 pm
	13	Joanne Hable 11 am - 1 pm Lorraine Swanson 1 pm - 3 pm
	20	Joanne Hable 11 am - 1 pm Lorraine Swanson 1 pm - 3 pm
	27	Melanie Peppard

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

Mar.	1	Lynne Flanagan-Tsombakos 11 am - 1 pm April Lane 1 pm - 3 pm
	8	Diane Lalone
	15	Lynne Flanagan-Tsombakos 11 am - 1 pm April Lane 1 pm - 3 pm
	22	April Lane 11 am - 1 pm Susan Filippone 1 pm - 3 pm
	29	Amy Coldwell 11 am - 1 pm Susan Filippone 1 pm - 3 pm

As we count down the days to the end of winter, it's time to clear out those racks and make way for fabulous Spring clothing! Keep an eye out for our incredible Winter Bag Sale launching in the coming weeks - you won't want to miss it!

Are you looking for a volunteer opportunity to start off the new year to help with our church's mission and the community? The Thrift Shop seeks 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 [april5850@yahoo.com](mailto:april5850@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 [april5850@yahoo.com](mailto:april5850@yahoo.com) or at 508-839-5850 (home) or at 508-596-8582 (cell).



## March Birthdays

Sara Hallor	3/9	Bill Keeler	3/11	Sue Howell	3/16
Maggie McLean	3/17	Sarah Drew	3/23	Henry Doherty	3/25



## CARE AND CONCERN CIRCLE

*March 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:

Barbara

Donald and Vidia

Bruce

Gail

Nicole

Adam

Charlotte

Benjamin

Kelli



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

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

[griftonucc@gmail.com](mailto:griftonucc@gmail.com)

# SHARING THE LIGHT

*Monthly Newsletter of the Congregational Church of Grafton*

Congregational Church of Grafton  
30 Grafton Common  
P.O. Box 421  
Grafton, MA 01519

PLACE  
POSTAGE  
HERE

Address Service Requested

The word "MARCH" is rendered in large, 3D block letters. The letters are colored in a gradient from dark green to light green/yellow. The letters are slightly shadowed, giving them a three-dimensional appearance as if they are standing on a surface.

CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF GRAFTON  
30 Grafton Common, P.O. Box 421, Grafton, MA; Telephone 508-839-4513  
WORSHIP SERVICES: SUNDAYS, 10 a.m.