

SHARING THE LIGHT

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



Volume 2, Number 11

NOVEMBER 2020 EDITION

Dear members and friends of our Congregational Church of Grafton:

God's steadfast love and my earnest hugs to all of you. May each of you know that you remain in my prayerful heart and in my heart-felt prayers...in all seasons.

During our month of November, two significant seasons intersect and unite:

Our Season of Commitment dawned on October 25 and concludes on November 15.

Our Season of Thanksgiving simmers throughout November and bubbles over on November 26.

In honor and in celebration of both seasons, may we consider this story.

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Once upon a time, a young man aspired to be a great artist. The second of eighteen children, he was born into a large but poor family in 1471 in Nuremburg, Germany. The young man's name was Albrecht Durer.

One of Albrecht's younger brothers also wanted to pursue art—sculpture--and both young men longed to study at the Vienna School of Art. However, given the great number of children in the family, the parents could not afford to send either son to any art school. Thus, the two brothers made an agreement with each other: One brother would work to support the other brother while the other studied in Vienna. Once that brother returned from Vienna, that same brother would then exchange places with the brother who had been working. The returning brother would labor to support the brother who had earlier worked to support his brother's art studies. The two brothers flipped a coin.

Albrecht won the toss and journeyed to Vienna where he studied drawing and metal-engraving for five years. His younger brother worked in the nearby stone and marble quarries.

After completing his studies and apprenticeship, Albrecht returned to his home in Nuremburg where his family celebrated his achievements with a great feast. During the meal, Albrecht observed his younger brother, who had worked in the quarries day after day for five years. Albrecht noticed that his brother kept his hands concealed.

Curious, Albrecht asked him, "Brother, why do you hide your hands?"

Ashamed, his brother pulled his hands from the folds of his garments. Sheepishly he showed them to his older brother.

Albrecht Durer saw his brother's hands—calloused and gnarled from the years of toil in the quarries.

So moved was Albrecht by his younger brother's sacrifice for him that he immediately strode to his studio.

That night, with the memory of his brother's worn hands as a model, Albrecht drew the now-famous image of praying hands as a sign of his gratitude to his younger brother.



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In this month that is deeply shaped by our Seasons of Commitment and of Thanksgiving, may we be thankful for today. May we be planting for tomorrow.



A Shove from the Dove

Beside you in the journey of faith,

Rev. Dr. Barbara Therese

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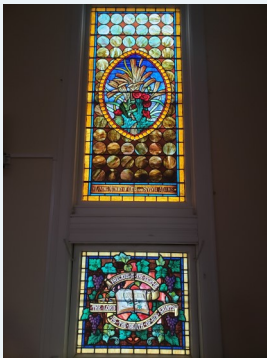
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Windows 2020

Our Stained-Glass Window Renewal Campaign

Pastoral Letter of Gratitude

Dear members and friends of our faith community and of our greater community:

What a seismic mission you have accomplished in the course of fifteen months!

On November 1, we are able to dedicate three restored windows through the tremendous generosity of members of our Congregational Church of Grafton, through the profound generosity of friends of our faith community and through the remarkable generosity of BSA Troop 107.

Gifts and contributions to the Windows 2020 Campaign totaled \$31,282. Previously non-designated Memorial Funds and unused resources from an earlier Capital Campaign provided the additional \$6400 needed to remove, restore and re-install three different panels of windows inside our sanctuary.

In March 2019, our congregation's Board of Trustees initiated the inspection of our sanctuary's stained-glass windows to identify which windows were most in need of repair. In April 2019, Stained Glass Resources (SGR) of Hamden, MA, provided a quote for the cost of our window restoration project. In May 2019, our Finance Committee recommended a one-year campaign to raise funds to restore the windows. In June 2019, our Cabinet approved the Windows 2020 Campaign. Our Windows 2020 Campaign officially began on July 31, 2019. In early November 2019, our Windows 2020 Pledge Drive was finalized to extend through October 31, 2020.

In early March 2020, representatives from SGR removed the three windows identified for restoration. Throughout spring and early summer, factory workers at the SGR plant disassembled the segments of the stained-glass windows, replacing broken segments and restoring the molding and wiring of the compromised portions of the three windows. In mid-August, four workers from SGR (Chad, Trevor, Joe and Connor) re-installed our three restored windows.

On Sunday, November 1, 2020—fittingly All Saints Day—we dedicate our three restored stained-glass windows.

Windows 2020—our Stained-Glass Window Renewal Campaign—was a faith community and greater community effort. With joy and gratitude we celebrate God's faithfulness and community spirit in preserving “the eyes to the soul of our church.”

Bless you for your faithfulness, your generosity and your vision.

Beside you in the journey of faith,

Rev. Dr. Barbara Therese

Eyes are the windows to the soul.

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

Holy Happenings in November!

***Faith-building events for our faith community
during In-Person Worship and
in Online Services on Sundays at 10 a.m.***

Join us at: facebook.com/UCCGrafton/

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November 1 = All Saints Day, Dedication of Restored Windows and Feast for All

Sermon: *With What You Have Left*

On the Second Sunday in our 2020 Season of Commitment,
we continue in our theme, "Thanksgiving for Today, Planting for Tomorrow."

As well, we name and give thanks for those who have blessed our lives
and who have passed from this life to greater life.

For our monthly "**Feast for All**" (aka Holy Communion),
please bring your own elements of bread and juice to our sanctuary or
assemble your own bread and juice at your home.

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November 8 = Living Testimony Sunday and Faith-Planting Sunday

Sermon: *Mountain, Get Out of My Way!*

Mr. Neston Melville-Jones, a newer member of our faith community,
gives his testimony of faith on the Third Sunday in our 2020 Season of Commitment.

Neston's Message will plant new seeds of faith as well as inspire deeper faith.

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November 15 = Commitment Sunday

Sacred Story: *Apples for Tomorrow*

On the final Sunday in our 2020 Season of Commitment,
we experience "Planting for Tomorrow" through the lens of a simple, but profound, fable.
Likewise, we dedicate our Commitments to our faith community for the 2021 calendar year.

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November 22 = Thanksgiving Sunday

Sacred Story: *'Twas the Night before Thanksgiving*

On this Sunday before Thanksgiving, we experience a life-changing mission
through the life-saving efforts of a handful of school children.

In addition, we name and give thanks for our personal Litany of Gratitude.

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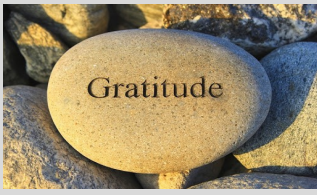
November 29 = First Sunday of Advent

Sermon: *Be the Tree!*

As we prepare for the coming of the birth of The Child,
we prepare our own hearts, minds and spirits for our journey to the manger.

As well, our sanctuary is "dressed in Advent apparel."

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Gratitude List:

An Exercise for Thanksgiving Day and for Every Day

*Thanks is the highest form of thought.
Gratitude is joy doubled by wonder. (Gilbert K. Chesterton)*

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Did you know that keeping a Gratitude Journal--

- Reduces stress?
- Increases positivity?
- Improves self-esteem?
- Makes one more joyful?
- Helps one to sleep more deeply?

As we—in our faith community—draw near the national holiday known as Thanksgiving Day, we are all invited to to name and share that for which we are grateful.

Suggestions for Starting and Maintaining a Gratitude List

1. Write down at least three gratitudes per session. Options:
 - a. Number your list, use bullet points, or write down three statements.
 - b. Dedicate a specific notebook to record your lists.
 - c. Create a document on your computer or iPad.
2. Focus on specificity. Being specific heightens your sense of awareness. Examples:
 - a. Rather than writing “I’m grateful for my friend,” express “I’m grateful that my friend brought me home-made soup when I was feeling down.”
 - b. Rather than writing “I’m grateful for autumn weather,” express “I’m grateful for the sound of winds through the leaves in my backyard.”
3. Include plentiful detail. The greater the detail, the greater the impact. Examples:
 - a. I’m grateful for the juicy home-grown tomatoes in my salad today.
 - b. I’m grateful for scent of pine trees while I walked in the park.
4. Highlight people or experiences, rather than objects or possessions. Examples:

Rather than writing “I’m grateful for my television,” express “I’m grateful for the visit to the art museum with my college friend.”

Rather than writing “I’m grateful for my garden,” express “I’m grateful for the scent of freshly-turned earth in my garden.”
5. Write freely, and fear not about grammar.

Invitation to Share One Gratitude on Thanksgiving Sunday, November 22

1. By email, submit one gratitude that you are willing to share with our family of faith.
2. **By Wednesday, November 18, at noon, email your personal reflection on gratitude to Kris Graham, Church Administrative Assistant, at: graftonucc@gmail.com. Memo line: Gratitude. Your gratitude will appear in bulletin.**

F.A.C.E. Group: Power of Youth to Make a Difference

One child, one teacher, one book, one pen can change the world. (Malala Yousafzai)



One person may make a difference, and everyone should try. Youthful members of our **F.A.C.E. Group** (**F**aith **A**nd **C**aring **E**ncounter Group) are not only trying to make a difference. They are making a difference.

In early October, F.A.C.E. Group member **Abby Hise** delivered a Message of Advocacy during our church's first-ever YOUTH*SPEAK Sunday. A 16-year old Junior at Grafton High School, she offered a compelling message, "Reality for Gen Z: Unrealistic Expectations Fueled by Media." Abby's passion is "to be kind and loving toward all humans--regardless of race, gender or beliefs." In her Message, she explored and explained how current social media provokes social behaviors that are anything but "kind and loving." Then Abby urged social media users to pause their use of social media--long enough to reflect on and assess the harms and consequences of social media.

In mid-October, F.A.C.E. Group member **Nick Coldwell** advised our church's Board of Trustees of his commitment to repair, restore and repaint our church's fire escape as part of his significant Eagle Scout Project for BSA Troop 107. As well, Nick committed to replace and restore the iron brackets holding wooden beams in place on the fence that borders our church property along Church Street.

In late October, F.A.C.E. Group Member **Emma Hise** completed the construction of our congregation's new Church Box (See photo below) that now graces the sanctuary of our Congregational Church of Grafton. Working in tandem with her grandmother, Mrs. Joanne Hable, Emma built a wooden church offering box by following instructions from a How-to-Build-a-Church-Model kit and by using tools and materials from her grandmother's impressive "Project Studio." The new Church Box—complete with a slot through which Sunday morning offerings made be inserted—serves as an effective means to receive monetary gifts from congregants during worship services since Offering Plates are currently deemed unsafe for use in our Season of COVID.

Abby, Nick and Emma are exercising their youthful power and making a powerful impact in our bold new world. During the coming weeks and months, members of our F.A.C.E. Group will continue to make a visible and audible difference in the mission and ministry of our faith community.

Abby, Nick and Emma: We thank you. And we are so proud of you!

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New Leaves on the Tree of Life in Our Faith Community

We celebrate another Baptism and another new beginning!

Last month, we joyfully celebrated the sacrament of Baptism of another young life within our congregation.

On October 18, during our in-person Sunday worship, our faith community celebrated the Baptism of Elliot Mark Capuzziello. Four-year-old Elliot was baptized by his parents--Mark Capuzziello and Julieanne (Collins) Capuzziello—as Rev. Barbara spoke the sacred words of the Ceremony of Baptism. Elliot's older brother Sam watched with big brotherly pride. Godparents, grandparents and members of our family of faith shared in the meaningful event.

At age four, Elliot was able to ask aloud the question, “Am I going to be baptized”? As well, young Elliot was able to identify four examples of the symbol of the Cross throughout our sanctuary—the same symbol that his mother Julie made on his forehead with water during the Ceremony of Baptism.

Our congregation promises to surround Elliot and his family with love, support and care as Elliot lives and grows in faith. With the Capuzziello family, we welcome Elliot into the universal Family of God!



Sharing-the-Light Food Collection

Our faith community continues its Sharing-the-Light Food Collection.

Currently our Food Collection encourages
stocking our on-site Loaves and Fishes Food Cupboard
as food insecurity among our community members has increased exponentially
in our Season of COVID.

Whenever you may drive to or near our church,
kindly bring non-perishable food items to the Loaves and Fishes Food Cupboard
located outside our church facility beside the Church Office door.

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Part of being a person is about helping others.



Updates from the Mission Outreach Committee

Food Cabinet

Barbara Gow and Diane Chaisson thank all the people who stepped up in recent days and weeks to restock the Loaves and Fishes Cabinet! There is still significant need for food in our community. Make certain that items donated are non-perishable. With colder weather, canned food items are susceptible to freezing. Thus, be mindful about weather consequence when donating food items. The Grafton Food Bank is now offering Food Drop-off Days. Watch *The Grafton News* and websites for dates and times.

Samaritan's Purse Shoe Boxes

Barbara Gow needs shoe boxes for Operation Christmas Child. Please bring any shoe boxes to the church during regular church office hours.

Christmas Giving Tree

Tags for children from the Pernet Family Center will be available at the end of November. We will provide requested items, as well as Gift Cards. We will also consult with Crescent Manor to see how we may best serve their clientele.

GRAFTON THRIFT SHOP VOLUNTEERS FOR NOVEMBER, 2020

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.

Nov.	5	Diane Lalone
	12	Diane Chaisson
	19	Diane Lalone
	26	Closed for Thanksgiving

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

Nov.	7	Sandy Cooper
	14	Sandy Cooper
	21	Kim Stewart
	28	Diane Chaisson

Our transition to winter is nearly completed! Come see our newly arranged Thrift Shop! Look for Christmas merchandise to appear around Thanksgiving. We hope to increase our hours in December to Thursdays, 11:00 am -3:00 pm and Saturdays, 10:00 am - 4:00 pm. As well, we welcome back Sandy Cooper.



November Birthdays

David Hardwick	11/2	David Gow	11/4	Oliver Drew	11/11
Joanne Wietgreffe	11/13	Bernice Benoit	11/19	Neston Melvill-Jones	11/20
Rebecca Hise	11/23	Elizabeth Torres	11/25		



CARE AND CONCERN CIRCLE NOVEMBER 2020

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:

Fred M.
Fiona
Christian C.
Amanda

Jennifer
Walt
Ron
Louise and George

Joan-Beth
Sara
Rose



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