

SHARING THE LIGHT

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



Volume 4, Number 1

JANUARY 2022 EDITION

Dear members and friends of our Congregational Church of Grafton:

It's a new month: January. It's a new year: 2022. It's a new series of stories—waiting to be lived.

Even with our abundance of “new-ness,” many not-so-new stories are worthy of telling...like this one, from Dawna Markova's *Spot of Grace: Remarkable Stories of How You Do Make a Difference*.

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Tyler, my six-year-old nephew, made me feel like the most important person in the world. He died suddenly three years ago. Telling vignettes about him brings him alive for me again.

When Tyler was three, during the intermission of Disney on Ice, a little boy seated behind us dropped a piece of popcorn on the floor. Tyler had his own box of popcorn. Though he did not know the boy, Tyler took a piece of popcorn from his box of popcorn and offered it to the boy. I have always recalled this episode as Tyler's pattern of random acts of kindness.

If a couple of weeks passed when I did not see Tyler, he greeted me with, “It's been a long time since I've seen you! I missed you! I waited and waited and waited!” Whenever I arrived at Tyler's home, he immediately took my hand, pulled me to the floor with him and asked, “So, what's happening?”

Tyler had an uncanny gift of remembering what was going on in people's lives. About eight months after I had shoulder surgery—long after others had stopped asking—he asked me one day, “Does your shoulder still hurt?”

Filling out a poster about himself in first grade, he completed the sentence, “I wish for...” with “everyone in the world to just get along.”

Shortly before what turned out to be his final Christmas, Tyler told his mother and father, “I don't want lots of presents this year. I want to get presents and food for the kids who don't have lots of things. I really don't need any more things.”

Tyler was truly the most giving, compassionate, sensitive child I have ever known. Each time I said “Goodbye” to him, I left convinced of my worth and wanting to do that for others.

* * *

Retelling the stories of those who have lived and died, but whose spirits live on, keeps alive the love that they shared.

On “In Memoriam” Sunday, January 23, we will retell stories of those church members and extended family members who have lived and died in the past year, but whose spirits vibrantly live on. The title of the Sacred Message that morning: “Goodbye Doesn't Mean I'm Gone.”

As a family of faith, let us gather in a time of tender remembrance and profound thanksgiving on Sunday, January 23, at 10 a.m.--either in-person or online—to recall and honor:

Peter Blanchard

David Gow

Don Flanagan

Walter Wietgreffe

John Frymoyer

Francis Guilmette

Jeff Swanson

Bill Cahill

Buddy MacCallum

Love endures all things....Love never ends. (1 Corinthians 13:7, 8)



Shove from the Dove

Beside you in the journey of faith,

Rev. Dr. Barbara Therese

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In Gratitude for Pastor's Gift



Dear friends and members of our Congregational Church of Grafton:

Blessings of health and wholeness to each of you in this New Year.

God's grace and my gratitude to all of you for the Annual Gift to the Pastor you gave in this Christmas season. Your outpouring of love and generosity profoundly moves my heart and spirit.

The passion, compassion and resilience of our faith community have fortified the story of faith of our congregation through seasons described by marriage vows:

In plenty and in want,
in joy and in sorrow,
in sickness and in health.

At the beginning of this New Year, may we renew our covenant to be loved and to be loving:

to be loved by God;
to be loving toward others.

As we begin our fourth year together as a community of faith, may gratitude--

make sense of our past,
bring peace for today, and
create a vision for tomorrow.

Faithfully and gratefully,

Rev. Barbara

New Year's Resolution: To Do the Work of Christmas

Poem written by Howard Thurman

When the song of the angels is stilled,
When the star in the sky is gone,
When the kings and princes are home,
When the shepherds are back with their flock,
The work of Christmas begins:
To find the lost,
To heal the broken,
To feed the hungry,
To release the prisoner,
To rebuild the nations,
To bring peace among others,
To make music in the heart.

* * * * *





Thankfulness for Wingless Angels and Acts of Kindness in Autumn

Dear people of faithfulness: *Kindness is the touch of an angel's hand.*

Our month of January—with its ice, sleet and snow—may obliterate the remnants of Autumn. However, our just-finished Autumn—whose first day rose on September 22 and whose final day set on December 21—evoked many moments of faith, hope and love within our faith community. Whatever our season, thanksgiving is to be an hourly practice—not simply a one-day-a-year food fest. Thus, we pause and give thanks for the wingless angels and doers of kindness in our midst:

Loving thankfulness to our **Women's Retreat organizers:** *Connie Hopkins, Betty Mack and Kathy Vandenengel.*

Bountiful thankfulness to our **organizers of Pies, Wreaths and Gifts Galore:** *Julie Capuzziello, Barbara Gow, Joanne Hable, Connie Hopkins, Sue Howell, April Lane, Lorraine Swanson and Kathy Vandenengel.*

Thankful shout-outs to our **Apple Pie Workshop Angels:** *Carrie and Craig Peacock.*

Enduring thankfulness to our **Director of Communications:** *Kathy Vandenengel.*

A bouquet of thankfulness to our **Floral Pot Angel:** *Betty Mack.*

Resounding thankfulness to our **Joyful Noise Bell Choir:** *Donna Blanchard, Joanne Hable, Abby Hise, Connie Hopkins, Elizabeth Torres, Lynne Flanagan-Tsombakos, Kathy Vandenengel, and Ron Sainio (Bell Choir Director).*

Jubilant thankfulness for our **Christmas Chorus:** *Donna Blanchard, Abby Hise, Connie Hopkins, Gwen Hopkins, Betty Mack, Bob McLean, Maggie McLean, Carrie Peacock, Craig Peacock, Kathy Vandenengel, and Ron Sainio (Chorus Director).*

Heart-felt thankfulness for our **Advent Wreath and Christ Candle participants:** *Donna Blanchard; the Coldwell Family (Amy, Erik, Sophie and Nick); Joanne Hable; Abby Hise; Bob and Sue Howell; and Megan Torres-Gillin.*

Robust thankfulness for our **Congregational Pageant players:** *Abby Hise and Kayson Jones.*

Sincere thankfulness to our **Deacons:** *Joanne Hable, Sue Howell, Craig Peacock, Kim Stewart, Lorraine Swanson and Holly Weitgreffe.*

Earnest thankfulness to **Thrift Shop volunteers:** *Diane Chaisson, Amy Koskinen, Diane Lalone, April Lane, Melanie Peppard, Kim Stewart, and Lynne Flanagan-Tsombakos.*

Thankful cheers to our **Nouvelle Voix speakers:** *Julie Capuzziello, Kayson Jones and Neston Melville-Jones.*

Beside you with thankfulness,

Rev. Barbara

Holy Happenings in January!

*Faith-deepening events within our faith community
during our In-Person and Online Services on Sunday mornings at 10 a.m.*

Connect with us at: facebook.com/UCCGrafton/

January 2 = Sharing-the-Light Sunday and Feast for All

Sermon: *Are You a Hoarder? Or a Sharer?*

On the outer cusp of “gift-getting” season,
we hear the story/parable of a stockpiling farmer.
Observing the miserly farmer, we ask ourselves,
“Do I hoard, too? Or do I share?”
Likewise, we join in the Feast for All (aka Holy Communion).

* * *

January 9 = Winter Concert

Theme of Concert: *In Tribute to Black Spirituals*

On this Second Sunday of the month,
when we offer “Simple Words, Simply Music,”
we consider a half dozen African-American spirituals:
Every Time I Feel the Spirit *We Are Climbing Jacob's Ladder*
Amen, Amen *There Is a Balm in Gilead*
Lord, I Want to Be a Christian *When Israel Was in Egypt Land*

* * *

January 16 = “The People Speak” Sunday

Sermon: *Why We Dare to Dream*

On this weekend when MLK, Jr.'s birthday is honored,
Mr. Kayson Jones, our Minister of Faith-Building,
looks back on North America's religious history
and
looks forward on shared spiritual dreams.

* * *

January 23 = “In Memoriam” Sunday

Sermon: *Goodbye Doesn't Mean I'm Gone*

On this Sunday morning, we name and honor those in our faith community
who passed from this life to greater life in calendar year 2021.
Candlelight, bells, sacred words and sacred music
will call to remembrance those souls who recently passed before us.

* * *

January 31 = “Once Upon a Time” Sunday

Sacred Story: *Where God Lives*

On this Fifth Sunday of the month,
when we hear, see and experience a sacred story,
we consider that God's “Spot of Grace”
may indeed be embedded within every human soul.



GRAFTON FOOD BANK

FRIENDS OF GRAFTON, INC.

Sharing the Light: Souper Bowl Canned Soup Drive ***January 2 – February 6, 2022***

Feeding the hungry is a greater work than raising the dead. (St. John Chryostom)

During the regular calendar year, our congregation collaborates with the Grafton Food Bank to collect these non-perishable items:

Canned fruit
Coffee
Peanut Butter

Solid white tuna in water
Cereal (Rice Krispies and Cheerios)
Toothpaste (4 oz. and larger)
Toothbrushes (two-pack)

However, during the five Sundays of January and the first Sunday of February, our faith community and service groups who meet in our church (i.e., Scouting organizations and Twelve Step groups) will combine efforts to support:

Annual Souper Bowl Canned Soup Drive

Five FAQs:

1. **What can we do?** Throughout the month of January and the first week of February, please bring **canned soup donations** to our church on Sundays or weekdays.
2. **Where can we see it?** Beginning Sunday, January 9, a large table in our sanctuary will display our ongoing **Canned Soup Drive**.
3. **How may we give?** A large basket (marked "Grafton Food Bank Donations") is located in our Church Kitchen and will welcome **canned soup donations** throughout the five-week canned soup drive.
4. **Who will benefit?** All **canned soup donations** will benefit our local Grafton Food Bank.
5. **What is our church's history of giving?** In 2020, our faith community and its chartered organizations contributed more than 700 **canned soup donations** for the Souper Bowl Canned Soup Drive.

*Small acts of kindness, when performed by a community of people,
may transform the world.*

Together, let us work as a community of kindness!



Important Announcement:
Annual Congregational Meeting

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WARRANT

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

The members are hereby notified that

on Sunday,
February 6, 2022, at 11:30 a.m.,

the Annual Meeting of the Congregation will be held to vote on the following articles:

Vote to accept the 2020 Church Annual Report

Election of Church Officers

Vote to approve change of Pastor's Contract to allow for Sabbatical after five years of service

Vote to approve Cabinet-approved changes to structure and accounting procedures of the Thrift Shop

Vote to approve other bylaw changes that Cabinet has reviewed and approved

Vote to accept the 2021 Church Budget

Adjournment

Quorum of 25 members is required.

The Cabinet of the Church

Bob McLean, Church Moderator
Elizabeth Torres, Church Treasurer

GRAFTON THRIFT SHOP

VOLUNTEERS FOR JANUARY 2022

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.	6	Melanie Peppard
	13	Joanne Hable
	20	Melanie Peppard
	27	April Lane 11:00-1:30
		Melanie Peppard 1:30-3:00

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

Jan.	1	Diane Chaisson
	8	Kim Stewart
	15	Lynne Tsombakos
	22	Diane Chaisson
	29	Kim Stewart

The 1/2 Price Christmas Sale continues into January!

The Thrift Shop is seeking more volunteers. If you would like to volunteer, contact April Lane at aprild5850@yahoo.com.



January Birthdays

Gabrielle McLean	1/3	Lynne 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 2021*

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:

Family of Don Flanagan
Amanda
Louise and George

Family of Francis Guilmette
Lois
Family of Bud MacCallum

Liz
George Ann
Donald



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