

SHARING THE LIGHT

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



Volume 5, Number 9

SEPTEMBER 2023 EDITION

Dear friends and members of our Congregational Church of Grafton:

The first prayer you ever learned to say aloud? Can you recall that prayer? May it have been a bedtime prayer?

*Now I lay me down to sleep.
I pray the Lord my soul to keep....*

When pressed for an answer to “What's the first prayer you prayed?”, many church-raised children-now-adults may reply “the Lord's Prayer” or “the Our Father.”

On Sunday mornings, within our Congregational Church of Grafton, we pray aloud the Lord's Prayer at the end of our Prayers of the People—near the conclusion of our time of faith-sharing. In this liturgical position, the Lord's Prayer serves as an emphatic exclamation point to the words of praise, of gratitude and of supplication that are offered prior to the words “Our Father, who art in heaven....”

In our habitual and often mechanical recitation of the Lord's Prayer, the meanings of the words and the origins of the images in the prayer may be blurred, overlooked or unquestioned.

Time for a change. No more mindless mumbling of the Lord's Prayer in our sacred space!

Beginning on Homecoming Sunday, September 10, and extending to the fourth Sunday of Advent, December 24, we will journey through meanings of the historic words and origins of the multi-layered images of the Lord's Prayer. Our new Bible Study/Sermon Series may draw us deeper into the spiritual practice called “prayer” and into the theological roots of this commonly spoken prayer.

The Contemporary English Version (CEV) offers this translation of the Lord's Prayer:

*Our Father in heaven, help us to honor your name.
Come and set up your kingdom, so that everyone on earth will obey you,
as you are obeyed in heaven.
Give us our food for today.
Forgive us for doing wrong, as we forgive others.
Keep us from being tempted and protect us from evil.*

Our nine-sermon series will focus on this traditional translation of the Lord's Prayer:

*Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.
Thy kingdom come; thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.*

Won't you join us in this journey?

* * *



Shove from the Dove

Beside you in the journey of faith,
Rev. Dr. Barbara Therese

Staff Information:

Rev. Dr. Barbara Therese, Minister
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Holy Happenings in September!

*Faith-filled events within our family of faith
during our in-person and online services on Sundays at 10 a.m.*

Connect with us: facebook.com/UCCGrafton/

September 3 = “Truce Sunday” and Ecclesiastes 3 – Sermon #14

Message: *Time for War, Time for Peace*

Join us on “Truce Sunday”

as we hear a life-changing testimony of peace
in the final sermon of our *Ecclesiastes 3* Series.

Our once-a-month Sharing-the-Light Food Collection
receives non-perishable food items
on behalf of the Grafton Food Bank.

As well, we celebrate the Feast for All (aka the Lord's Supper).

* * *

September 10 = Homecoming Sunday and Lord's Prayer – Sermon #1

Message: *Your God, My God, Our God*

Join us on Homecoming Sunday

as we begin a new Bible Study/Sermon Series on the Lord's Prayer
and as we bless the Deacons—those who “share the heart and holiness”--
of our faith community.

As well, linger longer after church to share
in “Sunday Sundaes” during our Time of Fellowship.

* * *

September 17 = “Listen, Learn and Live” Sunday and Family Sunday

Message: *Families: Biological, Blended and Blessed*

Guest Speaker/Presenter: Mrs. Courtney Smith

Join us on “Family Sunday”

as Mrs. Courtney Smith (MSW and a parent of a family who adopted a foster child)
shares wisdom on multiple family dynamics
and suggests that each family may be a blessed family.

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September 24 = Harvest Fair Sunday

Blessing of the Fair: 10 – 10:15 a.m.

Theme for Harvest Fair: *Share Light!*

Join us on “Fair Sunday”

as we gather on the church steps (facing the Common)
to bless the events and participants
of our 44th Annual Harvest Fair and Apple Pie Social!

[NOTE: No online service on September 24.

Rejoin us online on Sunday morning, October 1.]





**Save the Date for the 44th Annual Harvest Fair and Apple Pie Social!
Sunday, September 24, 2023 from 11:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.**

The Fair is an awesome way to Celebrate, Connect, Affirm, and Share our faith with our community.

We're working hard to get everything ready behind the scenes, and we need YOUR help on Fair Day to make it the best Fair ever! A Signup Genius will be available soon for volunteer opportunities.

Apple Pie Workshops will be held on the following dates. Watch your emails for details.

Monday, September 11 from 7-9 p.m.

Sunday, September 17 from 1-3 p.m.

Monday, September 18 from 7-9 p.m.

Please spread the word to your neighbors and friends to come to the Fair on September 24 to get their homemade apple pies and find great deals on the Yard Sale, books, toys, Raffle Baskets, and more! Enjoy a grilled hot dog or hamburger, or our famous chili or chowder. There will be live music throughout the day. Plus kids can play some fun games as well as enjoy a bounce house!

Please contact any of the committee with questions:

Sue Howell (suehow6oak@aol.com)

Joanne Hable (jnhable49@live.com)

Connie Hopkins (cmhopkins1@verizon.net)

Barbara Gow (barbaragow@gmail.com)

Lorraine Swanson (swanmom924@gmail.com)

Kathy Vandenengel (momv17@yahoo.com)



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)

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!



Coming This Fall - Discussion Groups!

The WOW Factor Committee is excited to offer opportunities for families and friends of our church to get together in discussion groups centered around topics of interest in our world today. We will begin in October with three topics that were mentioned several times in the focus group last spring: mental health, the environmental crisis, and prayer. See the descriptions below and decide which interests you. Further information on signing up will be coming soon!

Mental Health

The NYT #1 best seller, *Atomic Habits* by James Clear, has been chosen to start the discussion about mental health issues. This book offers strategies for forming good habits and breaking bad ones. Small changes in our behaviors can lead to remarkable changes in our personal and spiritual lives. Join with others interested in making positive changes in their lives.

Becoming a Praying Church

To enhance our journey to become a praying church, we will look at the book *Learning to Pray: a Guide for Everyone* by James Martin, SJ. This book was written for anyone wanting to know more about prayer--from atheists to professional church leaders. Topics that will be discussed include: What is prayer; How to pray; and What to expect when we pray. We are all individuals with unique styles for praying - come explore some new ideas.

Environment

Many people expressed an interest in environmental issues--certainly one of the hot topics in our world today. This group discussion will center around the book *Cathedral on Fire* by Brooks Berndt. We will explore the questions: Why should we care? What can we, as individuals, do? What can we, as a church, do?

For more information, please contact any member of the WOW Factor Team:

Donna Blanchard (011donna@gmail.com)

Joanne Hable (jnhable49@live.com)

Sue Howell (suehow6oak@aol.com)

Kathy Vandenengel (momv17@yahoo.com)



**Save the date! Our annual Women's Retreat will be held on October 20 - 22, 2023
at Edwards House in Framingham, MA.**

All women are invited to attend this wonderful gathering of faith-filled women from our church. The cost for the full retreat this year is \$225, which includes your room and all meals (Friday dinner through Sunday lunch). You may pay in installments or in full at any time. Make the check payable to the Congregational Church of Grafton, with "Women's Retreat" in the memo line. Full payment will be due by October 1, 2023.

This will be a planned schedule of inspiration and discussion, led by Rev. Barbara, who will focus on the theme "P-R-A-Y: A Four-Letter Word? Or a Four-Step Event?" We will schedule time for quiet reflection, as well as time to connect with others.

The photo is from our women's retreat in 2021.

Thanks to all of you! Contact any of us with questions.

Women's Retreat Committee

Connie Hopkins (cmhopkins1@verizon.net), Betty Mack (mackbetty@verizon.net),
Kathy Vandenengel (momv17@yahoo.com)

Sharing the Light = Sharing Our Unique Gifts

We can all be a light in the world by sharing our unique gifts and talents with others.

The Mission Statement of our family of faith issues two affirmations: To affirm our journeys and to affirm our unique gifts.

Our Congregational Church of Grafton affirms the unique gifts of kindness and generosity by inviting church friends and members to exercise those same gifts of kindness and generosity. Our church “affirms unique gifts” by welcoming donations on behalf of our local Grafton Food Bank. The following are the Food Bank's wish-list needs:

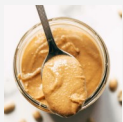
Canned fruit
Canned beans
Peanut Butter
Coffee

Solid white tuna in water
Cereal (Rice Krispies and Cheerios)
Toothpaste (4 oz. and larger)
Toothbrushes (2-pack)

On the first Sunday of each month, members and friends may contribute these items during our church service. Each week, a “Sharing-the-Light” Food Basket in Fellowship Hall welcomes these same donations. Each month, Rev. Barbara delivers all contributions to the Grafton Food Bank.

Being a light in the world is about lifting others up.

Bless you for sharing the Light and for sharing your unique gifts!



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Fellowship + Food = Community

Food and community are inseparable.

Food is to be shared with people to whom we are connected. (Bryant Terry)

Our church's newly adopted Mission Statement emphasizes our congregation's intent to “connect to the community.” An oft-quoted adage states: “Provide food, and people will come!”

Following worship on Sunday mornings, ***Sharing the Fellowship*** is an effective venue “to connect to the community.”

How may you “connect to the community” through ***Sharing the Fellowship?***

1. On a chosen Sunday morning, arrive at church by 9:50 a.m.
2. Bring: 3 dozen edible treats (example: cookies, muffins, sweet rolls and fruit)
 Half gallon of fruit juice (Apple or mixed berry is most popular.)
 Quart of Half & Half (for coffee and tea)
3. Place food items that require cold storage into the Church Refrigerator.
4. Add your name to the ***Sharing the Fellowship*** Sign-Up Sheets in Fellowship Hall!

*Thank you for building community by ***Sharing the Fellowship!****



GRAFTON THRIFT SHOP

VOLUNTEERS FOR SEPTEMBER 2023

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.	7	Joanne Hable 11 a.m. - 1 p.m. Lorraine Swanson 1 p.m. - 3 p.m.
14		April Lane 11 a.m. - 1 p.m. Lynne Flanagan-Tsombakos 1 p.m. - 3 p.m.
21		Joanne Hable 11 a.m. - 1 p.m. Lorraine Swanson 1 p.m. - 3 p.m.
28		Melanie Peppard

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

Sep.	2	Diane Lalone
9		April Lane
16		Lynne Flanagan-Tsombakos 11 a.m.-1 p.m. April Lane 1 p.m. - 3 p.m.
23		Susan Filippone
30		April Lane

The Grafton Thrift Shop is ready to say “good-bye” to summer and “hello” to the start of September with an End-of-Summer clearance \$10 bag sale! Stop by the first week of September and fill a bag with women’s, men’s and kids’ clothing and shoes for only \$10! Join us on Sunday, September 24th, during our 44th Annual Harvest Fair and Apple Pie Social from 11 a.m. - 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 want 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 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 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 2023*

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:

Donald and Vidia
 Louise and George
 Gary
 Mary S.

Bruce
 Cara
 Uncle Peter
 June
 Paul V.

Rathna
 Jen K.
 Tim M.
 Kelli M.



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