

# SHARING THE LIGHT

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



Volume 6, Number 4

**APRIL 2024 EDITION**

Dear friends and members of our Congregational Church of Grafton:

In this month of April, when gardens yearn to resurrect to new life, may the garden of your souls be nourished by this story: Mid-morning of one Spring day, a newly ordained clergywoman strolled through the public rose garden of her Midwestern town. She was accompanied by another woman minister, who had served in churches for 30 years and who was mentor to the novice minister.

The new minister had worked in her first church for only one month. She sighed aloud, "I want to honor my ordination vows and to serve God with all my heart, mind and spirit. How do I know how God wants to use me in my new church and with my new congregation?"

The veteran minister smiled at her younger clergy counterpart and replied, "That's a thoughtful question. Let's take a closer look at the roses."

The two women approached the nearest rosebush, which bore several opened roses and one unopened rosebud. The seasoned minister pointed to the single unopened rosebud and said, "See if you can open the rosebud without tearing any of its petals."

The new minister wondered, "What do rose petals have to do with how God uses me?"

Even so, the novice clergywoman bent down, gripped the rosebud with her fingers and tried to peel away the outer rose petals so as to unfold the rosebud. Despite her efforts, the new clergywoman could not pull away the petals in the rosebud without damaging the petals attached to the bud.

After a minute, the new minister said, "It seems I can't open the rosebud without harming its petals."

Her mentor nodded knowingly. Then the elder minister reached into her purse, lifted out her wallet and removed a small, folded slip of paper. She offered the slip of paper to the new clergywoman.

On the slip of paper was this poem:

## *Rosebud*

*It is only a tiny rosebud,  
a flower of God's design.  
But I cannot unfold the petals  
with these clumsy hands of mine.*


*The secret of unfolding rosebuds  
is not known to such as I.  
God opens rosebuds gently,  
but, in my hands, they die.*

*If I cannot unfold a rosebud--  
a flower of God's design--  
then how can I have the wisdom  
to unfold this life of mine?*

*So, I'll trust in God to lead me  
in each decision of my day.  
I'll look to God for guidance  
in each step of my life's way.*

*The path that lies before me  
only my Creator knows.  
I'll trust God to unfold my days  
just as God unfolds a rose.*



 *Shove from the Dove*

In the journey of faith,  
*Rev. Dr. Barbara Therese*

### **Staff Information:**

Rev. Dr. Barbara Therese, Minister  
Kristen Graham, Administrative Assistant, Editor  
Ron Sainio, Church Music Director  
Kayson Jones, Minister of Faith-Building

### **How to contact us:**

Office Phone: 508-839-4513  
Email: [graftonucc@gmail.com](mailto:graftonucc@gmail.com)  
Web Site: [www.uccgrifton.org](http://www.uccgrifton.org)

## ***Holy Happenings in April!***

*Faith-building events on Sunday mornings at 10 a.m.  
Come in person or view online!*

**Join online at: [Facebook.com/UCCGrafton/](https://www.facebook.com/UCCGrafton/)**

### **April 7 = KINDNESS Sunday and Fruits of the Spirit – Sermon #5**

**Message: *KINDNESS Is More Than a Random Act***

Gather with us on the first Sunday of Easter  
when our Message highlights  
the fifth “fruit of the Spirit”: Kindness.

Our Sharing-the-Light Food Collection continues  
to benefit the Grafton Food Bank.

Likewise, we share the Feast for All (aka Holy Communion).

\* \* \*

### **April 14 = GENEROSITY Sunday and Fruits of the Spirit – Sermon #6**

**Message: *GENEROSITY Is More Than Giving Money***

Gather with us on the Sunday before Patriots' Day (in Massachusetts)  
when our Message highlights  
the sixth “fruit of the Spirit”: Generosity.

\* \* \*

### **April 21 = FAITHFULNESS Sunday and Fruits of the Spirit – Sermon #7**

**Message: *FAITHFULNESS Is More Than a Pet Dog***

Gather with us on the Sunday before Earth Day  
when our Message highlights  
the seventh “fruit of the Spirit”: Faithfulness.

\* \* \*

### **April 28 = “My God Is...” Sunday**

**Message: “My God Is...”**

Gather with us on another Theological Sunday  
when the theme of the Message explores  
who “My God Is...”

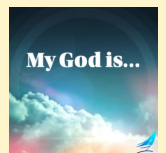
Our Preacher/Speaker is  
Rev. Carol Steinbrecher,

Area Conference Minister of the Central Region  
of the Southern New England Conference  
of the United Church of Christ.

**\*CHOOSE\*  
KINDNESS**



*Faithfulness*





## ***Confirmation Sunday Celebrates F.A.C.E. Group's Four-Month Journey***

*Just like love is a verb, so is faith.* (Nannie Helen Burroughs)

In the context of active faith and caring, six young people of our congregation examined their faith, engaged in two caring service projects and observed the faith traditions of five different religious communities during the faith-formation program called **F.A.C.E. (Faith And Caring Encounter) Group**.

These six young people are:

Joseph (Joey) Drew  
Lily Drew  
Rian Fisk

Matthew Lane  
Steven Lane  
Parker Staples

The two service projects were:

Christmas Wish List for the residents of the Crescent Manor Adult Care Facility  
Souper Bowl Canned Soup Drive to benefit the Grafton Food Bank

The five different worshipping venues that the young people experienced included:

Caribbean Pentecostalism  
Mennonite (Anabaptist Christianity)  
Unitarian Universalism  
South African Evangelicalism  
Conservative Judaism

Moreover, the young people participated in multiple worship opportunities within our church's New England-style of Congregationalism:

Advent Wreath Candle-lighting tradition  
Christmas Eve Candle lighting tradition  
Preparation of Communion elements and serving Holy Communion  
Special sound effects for a Spiritual Storm  
Dramatic Interpretation of a Parable  
Participation in the worship service on Confirmation Sunday

Rev. Barbara organized and facilitated the **F.A.C.E. Group** activities. She was assisted by family members of the participants.

The **F.A.C.E. Group** program began on the first Sunday of Advent, December 3, 2023. The four-month schedule of faith-based "Field Trips," of visits to community service centers and of on-site worship participation concluded with a Ceremony of Confirmation and a Confirmation Reception on Palm Sunday, March 24, 2024. On Palm Sunday/Confirmation Sunday, two young people were baptized for the first time while four other students affirmed their earlier Rites of Baptism.

By benefit of their spiritual journey of Confirmation, the six young people were joyfully welcomed into the membership of the Congregational Church of Grafton on March 24!

\* \* \* \* \*

# Update on the 2024 Capital Campaign

*Cherish our past, Renew in the present, Trust our future*

**The thermometer is still rising!**

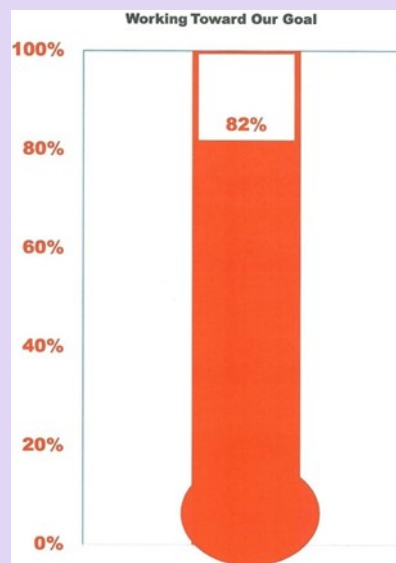
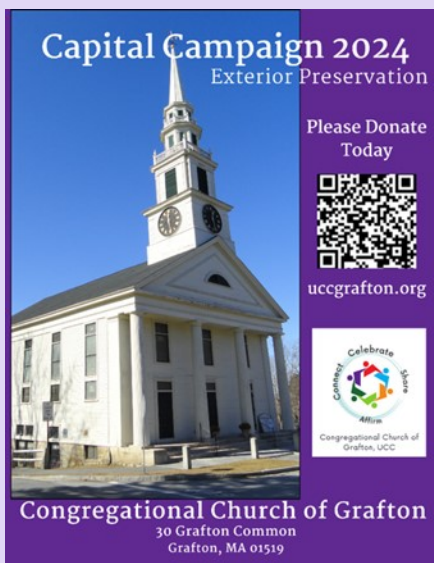
1. We are making great progress! As of March 28<sup>th</sup>, we have **\$40,935** pledged toward our goal of \$50,000 from members and friends.
2. On March 20, the CPC voted to recommend that \$120,000 be brought to the **May 13th Town Meeting** for final approval of the funds for our project. We need **everyone** to attend and vote for this funding to be approved. **Your vote counts!**
3. Look for our **GoFundMe** page and share it with all your friends!
4. **IMPORTANT!** Your pledges and donations are still important to reach our goal of \$50,000. Donations and pledges will be accepted through the end of the year.

If you wish to make a pledge, you may email the church collector at **apriid5850@yahoo.com**. Pledge payments or one-time gifts may be made by scanning the QR code below (PayPal or credit card), by mailing a check to the church, with “Capital Campaign 2024” on the memo line, or through our **GoFundMe** page.

Thank you for your ongoing support!

**The Capital Campaign Steering Committee:** Rob Lane, Donna Blanchard, Elizabeth Torres, Erik Coldwell

**The Fundraising Committee:** Donna Blanchard, Kathy Vandenengel, Sue Howell, Joanne Hable



## ***Sharing the Light Shows Forth Kindness, Generosity and Faithfulness***

*The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, **kindness**, generosity, **faithfulness**, gentleness, and self-control. (Galatians 5:22-23)*

In the liturgical season called Eastertide (the 50 days after Easter), our church continues its scriptural study of the nine fruits of the Spirit, as noted in Paul's Epistle to the Galatians.

During the first three Sundays in the month of April, the Bible Study/Sermons specifically focus on these three fruits of the Spirit: Kindness, Generosity and Faithfulness.

Members and friends of the Congregational Church of Grafton are encouraged to show forth these fruits of the Spirit by donating non-perishable goods to the Grafton Food Bank.

To address food insecurity in our local community, the Grafton Food Bank asks for these "Wish List" items:

**Canned fruit & vegetables**  
**Canned beans**  
**Canned tuna (in water)**  
**Pasta & pasta sauce**

**Cereal (Rice Krispies, Cheerios, Oatmeal)**  
**Ground coffee & tea bags**  
**Peanut Butter & jelly**  
**Pancake mix & syrup**

Every first Sunday morning of the month, these donations may be brought forward for the Sharing-the-Light Food Collection. During weekdays, a "Sharing-the-Light" Food Basket in Fellowship Hall accepts these donations. Throughout each month, all donations are regularly delivered to the Grafton Food Bank.

*Showing forth kindness, generosity, and faithfulness  
to those who experience food insecurity  
is a fruitful way to share God's Light.*

\* \* \* \* \*



## **Yummy Snacks Needed for Our Fellowship Time after the Service!**

There will be a Signup Sheet available at Coffee Hour.

A Deacon will make the coffee.

Please bring the following: A yummy snack (think muffins, pastry, breads, fruit, cookies) to share with everyone, a small carton of **half & half** and a small container of **juice** or some individual **juice boxes**.

Please arrive 10-15 minutes prior to the worship service to help set up the snack table. Then go downstairs about 5 minutes before the service ends to unwrap snacks, put out any refrigerated items and serve cups of coffee.

A Deacon is happy to help you.

THANK YOU SO MUCH!

Questions? Contact Lorraine Swanson (swanmom924@gmail.com)



## GRAFTON THRIFT SHOP

### VOLUNTEERS FOR APRIL 2024

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.

April	4	April Lane 11a.m. - 1 p.m. Lynne Flanagan-Tsombakos 1 p.m. - 3 p.m.
	11	Joanne Hable 11 a.m. - 1 p.m. April Lane 1 p.m. - 3 p.m.
	18	Joanne Hable
	25	Melanie Peppard

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

April	6	Diane Lalone
	13	Susan Filippone
	20	Joanne Hable
	27	Lynne Flanagan-Tsombakos 11 a.m. - 1 p.m. April Lane 1 p.m. - 3 p.m.

Spring (clothing) has sprung at the Grafton Thrift Shop. It's out with the old and in with the "new to you" Spring clothing debut this month! Stop in to refresh your Spring wardrobe.

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 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 [aprild5850@yahoo.com](mailto:aprild5850@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 [aprild5850@yahoo.com](mailto:aprild5850@yahoo.com) or at 508-839-5850 (home) or at 508-596-8582 (cell).



### April Birthdays

Betty Mack	4/1	Parker Staples	4/8	Curt Paine	4/9
Elliot Capuzziello	4/14	Joanne Hable	4/14	April Lane	4/15
Erik Coldwell	4/18	Lily Drew	4/18	Ron Sainio	4/21
Steven Lane	4/24	Winston Cotter	4/28	Barbara Therese	4/28



### CARE AND CONCERN CIRCLE

*April 2024*

Join the Care and Concern Circle by keeping these people in your prayers now and throughout the month.

***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:**

Frank P.  
 Mike  
 Denise  
 Cynthia K.  
 Tim M.

Nicole  
 Adam  
 Mary S.  
 Paul V.  
 Donald and Vidia

Bruce  
 Sally B.  
 Benjamin  
 Uncle Peter



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

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30 Grafton Common, P.O. Box 421, Grafton, MA; Telephone 508-839-4513  
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