

SHARING THE LIGHT

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



Volume 4, Number 4

APRIL 2022 EDITION

Dear members and friends of our Congregational Church of Grafton:

Faith is the daring of the soul to go farther than it can see.

Whatever our age, life seems to a collection of bizarre quizzes with no answers to half the questions.

An easy question may have an easy answer. A difficult question may have a difficult answer. For the most difficult questions, there may be no answer—except faith.

And questions about faith seem to fall into the “most difficult” category. Even so, we are urged to ask those “most difficult” questions...like:

1. What is so “holy” about Holy Week?
2. What is so “good” about Good Friday?
3. What is so eternal about Easter?

Our month of April invites us to ask those three questions and to consider faith's response.

On Sunday morning, April 3, we ask Question #2: What is so “good” about Good Friday? Our Scripture Reading (Luke 23:33-43) takes us to the foot of three crosses on Calvary where we overhear a conversation among Jesus and two other men who are crucified on either side of him. Today we call the event “Good Friday” when three men die by crucifixion on a hill called Golgotha (the Place of the Skull). The word “good,” however, seems a cruel misnomer. Or is it? In between the pained confessions and admissions of guilt is a singular promise of divine forgiveness that seeks to transcend the immense human suffering of that Friday.

On Sunday morning, April 10, we ask Question #1: What is so “holy” about Holy Week? Our five Scripture Readings and six hymns recreate the “holy” Way of the Cross: the Triumphant Entry of Jesus into Jerusalem when he hears “Hosanna! Hosanna!” (“Praise him! Praise him!”), the Garden of Gethsemane where Jesus prays to be spared from death, and the scene of his public execution where Jesus hears “Crucify him! Crucify him!” With words and music, our Palm Sunday service of “Simple Words, Simply Music” portrays the poignant intersection of human suffering and divine grace.

On Sunday morning, April 17, we ask Question #3: What is so eternal about Easter? With the Resurrection story (Matthew 28:1-8) fresh in our ears, we experience the Sacred Story of an unlikely modern-day Messiah—a Rag Man—who, though human and mortal, rises from death and whose spirit continues to heal, repair and restore those who encounter his Light in their own lives.

This month, join with our faith community on Sunday mornings at 10 a.m. to ask three “most difficult” questions about faith:

April 3, Fifth Sunday of Lent - Lenten Devotional on Forgiveness

April 10, Palm Sunday Concert - Music of Holy Week: “From Hosanna to Hallelujah”

April 17, Easter Sunday - Sacred Story: *Ragman*



Shove from the Dove

Beside you in the journey of faith,

Rev. Dr. Barbara Therese

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Holy Happenings in April!

*Faith-building events within our congregation
during In-Person and Online Services on Sundays at 10 a.m.*

Connect with us at: facebook.com/UCCGrafton/

April 3 = Lenten Devotional on Forgiveness

Sermon: 'Forgive' Is A Call for All

On this fifth Sunday of Lent and Communion Sunday,
we stand at the foot of the Cross,
and we hear one of the two men crucified with Jesus say:
“Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.”
As well, we share the Lord's Supper (the Feast for All).

* * *

April 10 = Palm Sunday Concert: From Hosanna to Hallelujah

On this final Sunday of Lent,
we hear the sacred story—in words and music--
of the Triumphant Entry into Jerusalem, the Last Supper,
the journey from the Garden of Gethsemane to the grave,
and a glimpse of the “Sonrise.”
Our Hand Bell Choir offers music of the Passion of Christ
while the congregation sings the hymns of Holy Week.

* * *

April 17 = Easter Sunday

Sacred Story: Ragman

On this Sunday when we celebrate the Resurrection,
we lift our voices with the jubilant cry “Alleluia!”
as we hear a Sacred Story of a modern-day Messiah.

We conclude our celebration
with Handel's “Hallelujah Chorus.”

* * *

April 24 = Welcoming Sunday and Proverbial Sermon #3

Sermon: *Does Money Buy Class?*

On this first Sunday after Easter,
we welcome new members into our faith community.
As well, we continue our Six-Sermon Bible Study Series
on the “Better...than Proverbs”
as we consider Proverbs 19:22:

***It is better to be poor
than to be a liar.***





New Member Class and Welcoming Sunday in April

1. Interested in learning more about the Congregational Church of Grafton?
 2. Interested in comparing and contrasting the history of the United Church of Christ (UCC) and of other faith denominations?
 3. Interested in becoming a member of our faith community?
- If any of these topics interest you, then you are warmly invited to:

Our third New Member Class on April 10 at 11:30 a.m. in the Fireplace Room

Our three New Member Classes (March 13, March 27 and April 10):

1. Encourage attendees to share highlights of their own story of faith;
2. Consider the background of the United Church of Christ (UCC);
3. Explore the history of the Congregational Church of Grafton, including a tour of the church.

Those who attend these sessions are invited to join the membership of our church on:

“Welcoming Sunday,” April 24, at 10 a.m. in the sanctuary of our church!

“If you love one another, others will know that you are my followers.” (John 13:34)

* * * * *

Third Annual “Holy Humor” Sunday: May 1st

The ones who have the faith...have the fun.

Calling all church comics, holy humorists and joyful theologians!

May 1—the first Sunday of May—marks our faith community's Third Annual “Holy Humor” Sunday. A yearly favorite among those who believe “holy laughter *is* the best medicine,” the Sermon for this Sunday is a collection of “heavenly ha-ha’s” and “smile-making, church stories” from friends and members of our faith community.

By noon on Thursday, April 21, email your comical, family-appropriate submissions of
bulletin bloopers,

Godly giggles,

spiritual surprises, and

witty one-liners

to: graftonucc@gmail.com

In subject line, print: Holy Humor – May 1

Those who laugh...last.



GRAFTON FOOD BANK

FRIENDS OF GRAFTON, INC.

Gratitude from Grafton Food Bank for Sharing-the-Light Food Collections

* * *

Did you know...

that our 4th **Souper Bowl Canned Soup Drive** (from January 2 to February 13) netted 145 donated cans of soup for the Grafton Food Bank?

Did you know...

that our monthly **Sharing-the-Light Food Collections** throughout the year make a significant difference in our needful community?

Our congregation recently received this letter of gratitude:

* * *

Dear Congregational Church of Grafton:

Thank you for organizing another Souper Bowl Food Drive at the church benefiting the Grafton Food Bank. This food will help many Grafton families in need. We also saw it “advertised” in the Grafton News for weeks. We appreciate you getting the word out.

We all know what its like to feel hungry after skipping a meal. Usually, when we eat, our hunger goes away. But when we talk about hunger as a problem, we're really talking about food insecurity. This can be a temporary situation for a household, or it can last a long time. We know that your congregation understands this, and we really appreciate your longtime support.

With gratitude,

Owen Carr

Grafton Food Bank representative

* * *

On each first Sunday morning of the month, during the “Message for All Ages,” our faith community assists the Grafton Food Bank by collecting 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)

As well, a sizable basket—identified with a sign reading “Grafton Food Bank Donations”—is located in our Church Kitchen and receives donated food items during the week.

Each month, Rev. Barbara transports the donated food to the Grafton Food Bank, housed in the Grafton Municipal Building.

May we all continue to support our neighbors in need.

We rise by lifting others.

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Looking Forward to Our New Normal

From the Onward and Forward Team

As COVID cases recede in Grafton and around Massachusetts, life is settling back into something more like normal. The Onward and Forward Team has been collecting information from the local Board of Health and the CDC and has developed a plan to bring our Family of Faith into the “New Normal.”

For the last two years, we have been following a conservative path to keep our diverse Family safe. The path forward, while still conservative, now has an end in sight. These are the changes you will be seeing over the next few weeks:

Masks will still be required through Easter, April 17. Beginning April 18, masks will be recommended, but not required.

Hymnals and Bibles will be returned to the pew racks.

Coffee Hour will return after the Service beginning April 24.

Communion, with bread and juice, will again be served by the Deacons.

Hybrid Worship services will be the New Normal: We will continue to offer the choice to live stream or worship in-person.

The Onward and Forward Team thanks everyone in our extended Church Family for being patient and for practicing the habits that have kept every member of the Family safe while in fellowship together. We look forward with you to a bright and healthy future.

The Onward and Forward Team,

Joanne Hable, Justin Cotter, Larry Drew, Sue Howell



Save the Date: Saturday, April 30, 2022! The Trustees invite you to join them for a Spring Cleaning Day from 9:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m. All are invited to help spruce up the church as we shake off winter and welcome the spring sunshine. Tasks for the day will be carried out indoors and include all skill levels, from light carpentry to sweeping floors with many little jobs in between. We look forward to seeing you!



Calling of Spring

Originally written by Barbara Crooker

*For we are here,
not merely
to bloom in the Light,
but, rather like trees,
to be weathered:
burned by heat, frozen by snow,
and though our hearts
have been broken,
still we put out new leaves
in spring,
to begin again.*

GRAFTON THRIFT SHOP

VOLUNTEERS FOR APRIL 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.

Apr.	7	Joanne Hable 11-1
		Katheryn McDonald 1-3
	14	Melanie Peppard
	21	Joanne Hable 11-1
		Lynne Flanagan-Tsombakos 1-3
	28	Melanie Peppard

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

Apr.	2	Diane Chaisson
	9	Lynne Flanagan-Tsombakos 1-3
		April Lane 1-3
	16	Diane Lalone
	23	Kim Stewart
	30	Diane Chaisson

Stop in to shop our Easter décor! Find a new Spring outfit!

The Thrift Shop is seeking more volunteers. If you would like to volunteer, contact April Lane at april5850@yahoo.com.



Easter Flowers

How wondrous our sanctuary looks with Easter flowers to brighten it on Easter Sunday morning! And what a meaningful way to contribute to this beauty by donating a flowering plant in memory of or in honor of loved ones or simply in celebration of Easter!

* * * * *

When: Deadline to order flowers is Sunday, April 3

How: Complete Order Form below. Mail or bring it to the Church Office, along with your check issued to: Congregational Church of Grafton. (Memo Line to read: Easter Flowers.)

Cost: Lilies - \$14.00
6" Tulips - \$12.50

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Flowers may be taken home after Easter Sunday service.

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Easter Flower Order Form

I want to contribute the following Easter Flowers for the sanctuary on Easter Sunday.:

Number of Lilies _____ 6" Tulips _____

I want this (these) flower(s) acknowledged in the Easter bulletin as follows: (Please print clearly.)

GIVEN BY: _____

or

IN LOVING MEMORY OF: _____

or

IN CELEBRATION OF: _____



April Birthdays

Betty Mack	4/1	Curt Paine	4/9	Elliot Capuzziello	4/14
Joanne Hable	4/14	April Lane	4/15	Erik Coldwell	4/18
Lily Drew	4/18	Joe Holm	4/21	Ron Sainio	4/21
Steven Lane	4/24	Winston Cotter	4/28	Rev. Barbara	4/28



CARE AND CONCERN CIRCLE *April 2022*

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 Brian Barlow
Amanda
Max

Liz
Lois
Jeff

Donald
Louise and George
Family of Bill Boelke



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