

SHARING THE LIGHT

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



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Alongside

By Kate Kennedy - published on October 21, 2025

Jesus told this parable: “Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee was praying thus, ‘God, I thank you that I am not like other people: thieves, rogues, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week; I give a tenth of all my income.’ But the tax collector, standing far off, was beating his breast and saying, ‘God, be merciful to me, a sinner!’ I tell you, this man went down to his home justified rather than the other, for all who exalt themselves will be humbled, but all who humble themselves will be exalted.” - Luke 18:9-14 excerpted (NRSV)

This parable’s moral seems delightfully clear: Exalt yourself, get humbled. Humble yourself, get exalted.

So, if I just act like the tax collector - stay humble, keep my eyes down, don’t pat myself on the back too much - I won’t be like that other prideful, judgy guy, right?

Oops. There I go, trying to prove I’m the faithful one: still creating distance from others, still trying to land on the “right” side in the eyes of God.

But there’s a footnote in *The Jewish Annotated New Testament* that opens this story up beautifully. Turns out, the Greek “rather than” could be translated “alongside.” Imagine hearing Jesus say, “This man went home justified *alongside* the other.” What a relief!

Because days of exaltation and days of humility come for all of us. Some days we pray like the Pharisee: “Thank God I’m not like them. Thank God I’m not ruled by fear or hate. Thank God I’m living my values.” Other days we pray like the tax collector, eyes lowered as we whisper, “God, be merciful to me, I really messed up.” Both prayers belong on the path of faith. Either way, we are justified. Either way, we are loved.

Prayer

Lord, you love me in my strength and my weakness. Give me the courage to walk in love and faith alongside my neighbors. Amen.

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Lacey's Lunchbox

Community Pet Pantry

Located outside the office door

Please take what you need and leave
what you can.



Music News

The choir will now be singing on the second Sunday of every month, beginning Nov. 9, with a rehearsal that same day at 9:15 am.

All singers are welcome to join! Just arrive by 9:15 and we will rehearse the music with Ron, then sing during the service.



CHURCH CARE GROUP

The Membership Committee has organized a Church Care Group to keep us all connected with our church family. Please contact Lorraine Swanson if you know someone in need of a card.

Whether it's wishes for a speedy recovery, a thank you, words of encouragement, miss you, or congratulations, who doesn't like receiving a caring card in the mail?

swanmom924@gmail.com 508-887-6214

Together we are the church. Let's take care of one another!



Faith Building Fall 2025

You are all invited to join our upcoming discussion groups and bring a friend if you would like! You don't need to prepare readings ahead of time, just come!

Thank you to Joanne, who led a Bible study this fall. It was enjoyed by all.

Donna is leading discussions on Thursday evening sessions inspired by **Psalm 46:10 verse "Be Still and know that I AM GOD."** This group will have their final meeting on October 30 from 6:00 - 7:00 pm, in the Fireplace room where we will offer light refreshments.

Advent Bible study - to be led by Rev. Bert after Sunday church services, beginning the first Sunday of Advent, Nov. 30 - Dec. 21. All are welcome.

Faith Building Team

Donna, Sue, Joanne, Lynne, Lorraine



Pies, Wreaths, Chili, Chowder and Cheer!

Sunday, November 23

Noon - 3:00 pm

This is a fun annual event!

In addition to apple pies, there will be a bake sale to benefit the Women's Retreat fund. We'll also have chili, chowder, and wreaths for sale (from the Scouts)! The Thrift Shop will be selling their Christmas items, just in time for the holiday season.

Volunteers will be needed to help bag Thrift Shop items and also to collect money. We will also need people to bake something yummy for the bake sale table.

Please contact Lorraine with any questions.



Women's Retreat

Another amazing women's retreat is in the books! Nine women plus our leader, Rev. Betsy Waters, enjoyed a wonderful time at Silver Lake Camp & Retreat Center in Sharon, CT. Lots of conversation, music, prayers and sharing made for an insightful and inspirational weekend. That part of CT is beautiful with many farms, fields, lakes and rivers, and the retreat center is set in a fairly remote area (no cell service and unpredictable WiFi!). Our annual women's retreat is a very special tradition in the history of our church. We are so blessed to have this opportunity.



NEWS FROM MISSION OUTREACH

BAGGED LUNCHES FOR THURSDAY CAFÉ

Watch for a Sign-Up to donate lunch items or volunteer to help make bagged lunches in the church kitchen at 10:30 on Thursday, November 20.

THANKSGIVING FOOD BASKETS

We invite you to contribute a Food Basket with non-perishable canned and boxed items needed for a family's Thanksgiving meal. In addition, we ask that the basket may include a Gift Card or Gift Certificate for the family to purchase a turkey. To ensure timely delivery before Thanksgiving Day, please deliver your basket to our church kitchen by noon on Sunday, November 23. These will be given to people in Worcester through Pernet Family Health Services.

Suggested items to include:

Box of Stuffing Mix
Box of Mashed Potato or Scalloped Potato Mix
Canned Vegetables
Canned Cranberry Sauce
Gravy Jar or Mix
Dry Mix for Rolls or Breads
Pudding or Pie Filling, etc.

If you would like to donate a gift card for a turkey without making up a basket, we invite you to drop it off at the church office in an envelope marked Thanksgiving Food Baskets. Gift cards can be from Stop & Shop, Price Chopper, Price Rite, Walmart, VISA or Mastercard.

In lieu of a basket, feel free to pack your items in a reusable shopping bag or storage bin!

GRAFTON FOOD BANK

Please remember our neighbors in need, especially at this time when funding for food assistance programs has been cut, and during the government shutdown. We will be bringing your donations to the food bank on a weekly basis.

MISSION OUTREACH CONTINUED...

NEW COATS FOR VETERANS

The “Buy-Give-Get” promotion is back at Ocean State Job Lot! Together we can help veterans in need stay warm this winter by donating new winter coats through “Buy-Give-Get.”

Go to any Ocean State Job Lot store and:

1. Buy a winter coat for just \$45
2. Give the coat you purchased back to the cashier, and Ocean State will make sure it's delivered to a veteran in need.
3. Get a \$40 Crazy Deal Gift Card - free!

You can then use the \$40 Gift Card any day afterward (not on the same day as the coat purchase) for any items you choose, and a veteran receives a brand new winter coat!! If you cannot get to Ocean State Job Lot in Westborough or Whitinsville, but you wish to participate, please put a check for \$45 in an envelope marked Coats For Veterans and drop it at the church office or give to a member of the MOC. We will purchase the coat and give you the Gift Card.

WHITE SOCKS FOR WORCESTER FELLOWSHIP

As the cold weather approaches, homeless and at-risk adults are in great need of clean, dry white socks. These socks protect their feet from getting cold, getting wet, getting blisters, or getting foot ailments that can send them to the emergency room. During the months of November and December, we would like to collect as many pairs of men's and women's large white socks as we can! Please help us by bringing new pairs of white socks to the church - there is a bin in the kitchen labeled “Socks for Worcester Fellowship.”

CHRISTMAS GIVING TREE

The Christmas Giving Tree will be set up on Saturday, November 29 in the Fellowship Hall. Our family of faith wishes to bring some cheer to families and children in Worcester through Pernet Family Health Services, and to residents of Crescent Manor Nursing Home here in Grafton!

Please take a tag, purchase a special Christmas gift item, and place your gift (unwrapped or in a gift bag with the tag attached) in the Sanctuary by Sunday, December 14.

What a wonderful way to share the joy of this Christmas season!

Blessings to all!

The Mission Outreach Committee

Sue Howell, Barbara Gow, Donna Caracino





GRAFTON THRIFT SHOP VOLUNTEERS FOR NOVEMBER 2025

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. 6	Joanne Hable 11 am - 1 pm
	Lorraine Swanson 1 pm - 3 pm
13	Melanie Peppard
20	Joanne Hable 11 am - 1 pm
	Lorraine Swanson 1 pm - 3 pm
27	CLOSED - HAPPY THANKSGIVING

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

Nov. 1	April Lane
8	Amy Coldwell
15	Susan Filippone
22	Diane Lalone
29	Lynne Flanagan-Tsombakos 11 am- 1 pm
	April Lane 1 pm - 3 pm

Sunday 11/23 - 12 p.m. to 3 p.m. (Pies, Wreaths, Chili, Chowder & Cheer

Nov. 23 Lynne Flanagan-Tsombakos / April Lane

November is the perfect time to express gratitude, and at the Grafton Thrift Shop, we're especially thankful for our wonderful customers in 2025! This month, pop in to find some delightful Thanksgiving décor to brighten your home. We have beautiful platters for your turkey and a variety of serving pieces to enhance your dinner table. Mark your calendars for Sunday, November 23rd, from 12 p.m. to 3 p.m. for an early start on your Christmas decorating! On that day, the Grafton Thrift Shop will be joining the Pies, Wreaths, Chili, Chowder and Cheer event at the Congregational Church of Grafton. Visit the Fellowship Hall for an array of Christmas décor, and don't forget, we'll be open that afternoon as well - alongside our regular Thursday and Saturday hours. See you soon!

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 would like 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 april5850@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 april5850@yahoo.com or at 508-839-5850 (home) or at 508-596-8582 (cell).



November Birthdays

David Hardwick	11/2	Oliver Drew	11/11	Linda Bagdasarian	11/16
Bernice Benoit	11/19	Elizabeth Torres	11/25		



CARE AND CONCERN CIRCLE

November 2025

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

We pray for recovery, well-being and comfort for:

Steven	Gary	Adam
Donald and Vidia	Nicole	Greg
A friend in need	Kelli	
A young adult struggling with a serious health issue		
A son struggling with his mental health		
A family member in need of extra prayers for hospital procedure		
Peace in the Middle East and throughout the world		
The Featherstone family on the loss of two sisters, and with joy, the birth of a granddaughter		



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