

# SHARING THE LIGHT

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



Volume 7, Number 12

**DECEMBER 2025 EDITION**

## What Remains

By Phiwa Langeni - published on November 28, 2025

*And Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. - Luke 2:19 (NRSVUE)*

The guests have gone home. Yesterday's feast reduced to leftovers and crumbs. Joy lingers in the quiet - until the quiet deepens. The celebration is over, and here you are.

Your hands are still. Your body aches from all the running around. Your mind replays what was said, what was felt, what slipped quietly past you. You wanted to capture the wonder-filled moments, to stretch them longer, to stay tucked inside their warmth.

But those moments have moved on. Their sparkle lingers in the corners. And still, you are here. Beloved, this, too, is holy. The after. The hush. The room no longer full, but not quite empty. A quiet that hums with what once was.

Mary, worn from labor and awe, made space to ponder. Her spirit - and her arms - were full. There was plenty for her to figure out and explain and document and plan and, and, and... But she pondered. She cradled the mystery as gently as the child in her arms, letting the unknown rest beside her like a dear companion.

Like Mary, you don't have to rush to the next thing and plan for the next thing after that and process past things and get stuck on things older than that and, and, and... Treasure what remains.

Let what was be enough for now. Let wonder linger. Let stillness speak. Let memory rest. Let tomorrow arrive. Let breath return. Let your spirit mend. Let yourself be.

## Prayer

God of quiet fullness, thank you for the sacred pause after the sacred celebration. Teach me to tend what is left behind with care. Help me treasure moments I can't fully explain. Let my spirit find its rhythm again in the silence. Amen.

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Rev. Bert Cote, Bridge Minister  
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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 sing on December 21 this month, since our Nativity story will be held on December 14.

Rehearsal will be on the 21st at 9:15 a.m. All singers are welcome!



### **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](mailto:swanmom924@gmail.com) 508-887-6214

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



## ORDER YOUR CHRISTMAS POINSETTIAS

*Holiday flowers transform our sanctuary into a festive sacred space! You may contribute to this by donating a poinsettia in honor of or in memory of loved ones or in celebration of this season of Light.*

**When:** Deadline for ordering is Tuesday, December 9.

### ORDER NOW!

**How:** Complete the Order Form below. Mail or bring it to the Church Office; give it to a Deacon; or leave it in the Office Mail Slot on Sunday mornings.

**Cost:** \$13.50 per plant. Please issue checks to: Congregational Church of Grafton (Memo line: "Christmas Flowers").

NOTE: You may take your poinsettia with you after our Christmas Eve Candlelight Service.

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### ***Poinsettia Order Form***

*I wish to contribute a poinsettia plant:*

**DESIRED PLANT COLOR** (Indicate quantity of each): \_\_\_\_\_Red \_\_\_\_\_White\_\_\_\_\_Pink

# of poinsettias \_\_\_\_\_X \$13.50/each = \$\_\_\_\_\_ total payment.

*Please acknowledge this (these) poinsettia(s) in the Christmas Eve bulletin as follows:*

**GIVEN BY:** \_\_\_\_\_

**IN LOVING MEMORY OF:** \_\_\_\_\_

**IN HONOR OF:** \_\_\_\_\_



### Faith Building

All are invited to join our **Advent Bible study**. This is being led by Rev. Bert, after Sunday church services. The first Sunday of Advent, November 30, was the first session. It will continue weekly through December 21.

Watch for announcements about **New Members Classes**, to be held in January!

Also planned for January/February are small group sessions on

- **Grief**
- **Caregiving**
- **Online Security**

Lots of opportunities to grow and serve and enrich!

Faith Building Team

Donna, Sue, Joanne, Lynne, Lorraine



### Special Services in December

A **Blue Christmas** service will be jointly led by Rev. Bert Cote and Rev. Daniel Gregoire of the Unitarian Universalist Society, on Thursday, December 18 at 6:00 pm at UUSGU, across the common.

The service offers a space for people who are grieving or struggling during the holiday season. It acknowledges sadness, loss, and loneliness, and provides comfort, hope, and a sense of community, offering an alternative to traditional, celebratory holiday events. The service will include prayers, reflection, music and candlelight.

All are welcome.

Don't miss our **Christmas Eve Candlelight** service on December 24 at 7 pm. Included in this service will be special flute music played by Donna Blanchard.



We are participating in the **Grafton Celebrates the Holidays** event again this year on December 7 from 12:00 pm - 4:00 pm. We are looking for a few people who can help at the Frosty Stop, to serve cocoa and cookies, and supervise Gaga! Please let Lorraine know if you can help.

Come join us and greet our friends and neighbors!

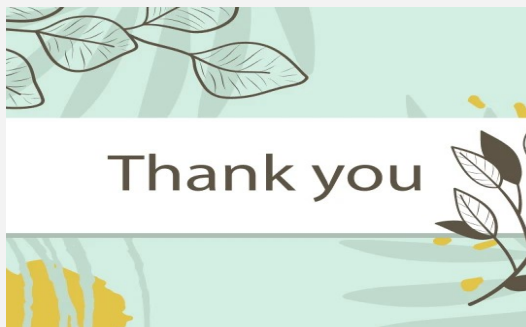


## THE BIRTH OF JESUS: A NATIVITY STORY

**Sunday, December 14** - As we did last year, we'll be doing a simple, meaningful, and enjoyable program during the service.

- We will be presenting the Christmas Story in simple, kid-friendly terms, along with passages from the Gospel of Luke, and punctuated with the Carols we all love to sing.
- Everyone can arrive a few minutes early (perhaps 9:45?) to pick out Nativity costumes that will be on the back pews (children and adults are invited to put on a costume they like), or come in their own Nativity costume if they prefer!
- We will invite the children to come up front to sit on the floor of the chancel area. Two adults will Narrate the Christmas Story, read the Scripture passages, and the Choir will lead all of us in singing the Carols throughout the story.

After the service, all are invited downstairs for a **Cookie Swap**! To participate, please bring three dozen homemade cookies:) There will be other goodies to eat too.



A huge thank you to Rev. Bert, whose last service with us as our bridge minister, will be the Christmas Eve service. He has faithfully served us for the past 8 months.

We are all so grateful and blessed to have had his calm, caring, friendly, and knowledgeable presence in our midst. Bert preached sermon messages that we could all use in our every day lives.

We wish you all the best and will miss you!



Thank you to those who have sent in their pledges!

And a reminder that if you haven't sent your pledge in for the 2026 budget planning, we would appreciate hearing from you as soon as possible this month, by emailing April Lane at [april5850@yahoo.com](mailto:april5850@yahoo.com) with your total pledge amount and whether it's weekly, monthly, quarterly or a one time annual payment.





## NEWS FROM MISSION OUTREACH

### THANKSGIVING FOOD BASKETS - **THANK YOU!**

We received a roomful of filled baskets/bags of Thanksgiving items! These were given to people in Worcester through Pernet Family Health Services. This is a very generous and caring church!

### 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. Pack 107 will be partnering with us from now until December 12. The scouts plan to publicize this, collect food items, and each week they will take all of the items from the church baskets to the Food Pantry shelves in the Municipal Center.

### 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 \$45 Crazy Deal Gift Card - free! You can then use the \$45 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

**White socks - are coming in!** 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 was 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 DECEMBER 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.

Dec. 4	Joanne Hable 11 am - 1 pm
	Lorraine Swanson 1 pm - 3 pm
11	April Lane 11 am - 1 pm
	Lynne Flanagan-Tsombakos 1 pm - 3 pm
18	Joanne Hable 11 am - 1 pm
	Lorraine Swanson 1 pm - 3 pm
25	CLOSED - Merry Christmas!

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

Dec. 6	Susan Filippone
13	Amy Coldwell
20	Lynne Flanagan-Tsombakos 11 am - 1 pm
	April Lane 1 pm - 3 pm
27	Diane Lalone

### Sunday - 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. - Grafton Celebrates the Holidays - Frosty Stop #32

Dec. 7 April Lane

The Grafton Thrift Shop is the perfect spot this December for picking up holiday decorations or finding that one-of-a-kind gift for someone special! Don't miss out - join us on Sunday December 7, from 2 pm to 4 pm as part of your Frosty Stops tour around Grafton and Grafton Common. Warm up with a delicious cup of hot cocoa and treat yourself to a cookie in the Fellowship Hall, generously hosted by the church members.

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 [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).



## December Birthdays

Kim Stewart	12/7	Kathy Vandenengel	12/7	Matthew Torres	12/8
John Doherty	12/9	Isabelle Cotter	12/10	Kathryn Anderson	12/13
Holly Wietgreffe	12/25	Carrie Peacock	12/26	Gabriel Koskinen	12/30



## CARE AND CONCERN CIRCLE *December 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 young man diagnosed with melanoma		
Charlotte	The Zona family	
Alyssa, Andrew and Remy	Kris, a nephew recovering from a stroke	
A sister who passed away	The joyful noise of children in church	



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<https://www.instagram.com/uccgraffton/>

[grafftonucc@gmail.com](mailto:grafftonucc@gmail.com)



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WORSHIP SERVICES: SUNDAYS, 10 a.m.