

SHARING THE LIGHT

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



Volume 6, Number 2

FEBRUARY 2024 EDITION

Dear friends and members of our Congregational Church of Grafton:

Self-reflection.

Self-reflection is an art, a discipline and an exercise in spiritual growth.

Self-reflection may turn experience into insight.

Self-reflection does not prevent us from making mistakes, but it does allow us to learn from them.

If we always do what we have always done, we will always be where we have always been.

Contrasts often provide us a lens for clearer, deeper self-reflection. When we are confronted with contrasting choices, behaviors and conditions outside ourselves, we may discern the true nature, motives and motivations of our inner selves.

In Spring of 2021, our faith community engaged in an eight-sermon series on the Beatitudes of Jesus (Matthew 5:3-12), which begin “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of God,” and which conclude “Blessed are you when people revile you, persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you on my account, for your reward is great in heaven.”

For the sake of self-reflection, may we consider this pair of “Contrasting Beatitudes”:

The Devil's Beatitudes

Blessed are those who are too busy to find sanctuary with God, for they are in my playground.

Blessed are those who demand to be asked and who expect to be thanked, for I can use them.

Blessed are those who nitpick the mannerisms of ministers and pastors, for they are my soldiers.

Blessed are the temperamental who stop attending church, for they are my missionaries.

Blessed are those who claim to love God and who simultaneously berate others, for they are mine.

Blessed are the incessant fault-finders, for they will be called my children.

Blessed are those who take no time to pray, for they are easy prey for me.

Blessed are you who, when you read this, think it is about other people and not about yourself, for...I've...got...you!

(From 150 More Stories for Preachers and Teachers by Jack McArdle)

A Disciple's Beatitudes

Blessed are the patient, for they will get tasks done and done well.

Blessed are the faithful, for they will be like safe anchors in a world of broken moorings.

Blessed are the honest, for they will be to society what yeast is to bread.

Blessed are the humble, for they will find rest for their souls.

Blessed are the generous, for they will keep alive our faith in the essential goodness of humankind.

Blessed are the caring, for they will shine out like beacons in a world darkened by indifference.

Blessed are the genuine, for they will glow like gems in a culture of falsehood.

Blessed are you who do not give up hope, for you will see your visions take shape.

(From Windows on the Gospel: Stories and Reflections by Flor McCarthy)

The season of Lent—the 40 days before Easter—is a season for reflection and for self-reflection.

This year, Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, February 14.

This season, may we reflect inwardly using these contrasting Beatitudes as our sacred mirrors.

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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

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Important Announcement
-
Annual Congregational Meeting

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**WARRANT
TO THE MEMBERS OF THE
CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF GRAFTON, MASSACHUSETTS:**

The members are hereby notified that on Sunday, February 11, 2024, at 11:30 a.m. via virtual meeting (with information to join such meeting to be provided at least one week prior), the Annual Meeting of the Congregation will be held to vote on the following articles:

Vote to accept the 2023 Church Annual Report

Vote to Suspend Term Limitations and Committee Size Requirements for the Coming Year.

Election of Church Officers

Vote to accept the 2024 Church Budget

Adjournment

A quorum of 25 members is required.

Respectfully posted by:

The Cabinet of the Church

Robert Lane, Church Moderator

Elizabeth Torres, Church Treasurer

Zoom Information to Join Meeting

Time: Feb 11, 2024 11:30 AM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting <https://blueprintmedicines.zoom.us/j/95205069479?pwd=U3ZLRmViQ0lTWklYQ0tUV3BBejdKdz09>

Meeting ID: 952 0506 9479

Passcode: 296823

By phone: +13052241968,,95205069479# US

2024 Capital Campaign

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

You are invited to join a long line of people who passionately dedicated themselves to stewarding this very building for a bright future. The history of this church building is inspiring, its present use is vibrant, and its future is in our hands.

The 300-year anniversary of the first gathering of church members and the 200-year anniversary of the construction of this very building are less than a decade away in 2031 and 2033, respectively.

With these meaningful milestones in mind, we are launching an important Capital Campaign for the painting and repair of the exterior of our church building.

Please consider pledging to this very worthy cause. Your gift will enable us to:

1. Continue our presence in the community as an active and welcoming gathering place;
2. Be a home for church members and friends to Celebrate, Connect, Affirm and Share together;
3. Preserve the link between the past and future through the ongoing renewal of our historic gathering place.

Pledges may be made by scanning the QR code below or by returning the pledge card that will be sent to your home soon.

Thank you for your 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



Holy Happenings in February!

*In-person and online services to strengthen one's faith
on Sundays at 10 a.m.*

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

February 4 = Serenity Sunday and Prayers around the World – Sermon #3

Message: *Grant Me Serenity*

Gather with us as we explore the origin and enduring power
of the world-famous Serenity Prayer,
and as we continue our Souper Bowl Canned Soup Drive.
We also celebrate the sacrament of Holy Communion,
with members of the ***F.A.C.E. Group***
serving the elements of bread and juice.

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February 11 = Team Sunday and Prayers around the World – Sermon #4

Message: *Grant Me Insight*

Gather with us as we reflect on the universal relevance
of a familiar Coach's Prayer on Super Bowl Sunday.

NOTE: Annual Congregational Meeting
will be conducted by Zoom at 11:30 a.m.

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February 18 = LOVE Sunday and Fruits of the Spirit– Sermon #1

Message: *LOVE Is More Than a Feeling*

Gather with us on the First Sunday in Lent
as we begin a new sermon series
on the eight “fruits of the Spirit,”
recorded in Galatians 5:16-22.

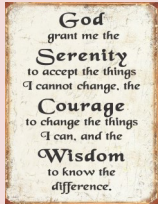
First “fruit” of focus: Love.

* * *

February 25 = JOY Sunday and Fruits of the Spirit – Sermon #2

Message: *JOY Is More Than a Christmas Spirit*

Gather with us on the Second Sunday in Lent
as we continue our sermon series
on the eight “fruits of the Spirit” (Galatians 5:16-22).
Second “fruit” of focus: Joy.



Sharing the Light → Souper Bowl Soup Drive

Love only grows by sharing.

You may only have more for yourself by giving it away to others. (Brian Tracy)

For the first three weeks of February, members and friends of the Congregational Church of Grafton are encouraged to continue their support of:

Souper Bowl Canned Soup Collection

From early January to mid-February, our faith community and other organizations who meet in our church facility engage in a special six-week collection of canned soup to support the Grafton Food Bank. Kindly bring your donations of canned soup to the Sharing-the-Light Food Collection on Sunday morning (February 4) and to the Grafton Food Bank Collection Basket in the church kitchen on weekdays (now through February 18).

Our goal for this year's Souper Bowl Canned Soup Collection?

400 cans of soup!

Be willing to share your blessings.

The only riches that endure are those that are given away.



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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.

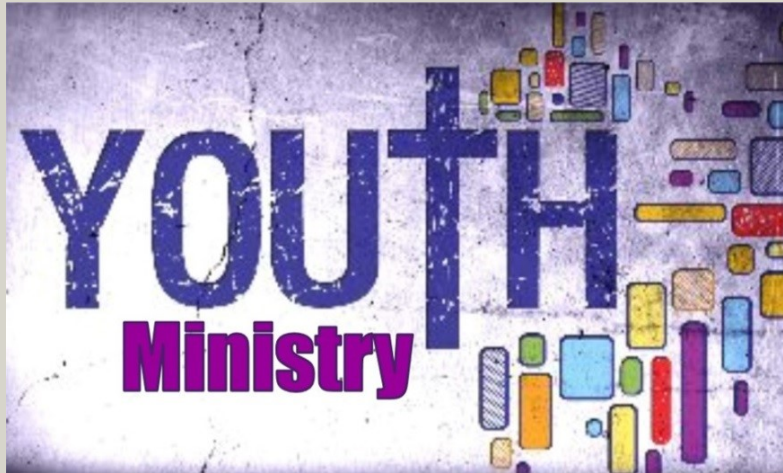
Please bring the following: A yummy snack (think muffins, pastry, breads, fruit, cookies) to share with everyone, a small carton of **half & half** and a small container of **juice** or some individual **juice boxes**.

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)



F.A.C.E. Group Jumped-Started in January!

The smallest seed of faith is more significant than the largest fruit of happiness. (Henry David Thoreau)

Within our faith community, six young people are actively nurturing their personal seeds of faith by experiencing how other faith communities seek God, see God and serve God. In the context of the **F.A.C.E. (Faith And Caring Encounter) Group**, our upcoming generation of faith leaders is learning—face-to-face—about other religions, denominations and spiritual paths.

The **F.A.C.E. Group** is a four-month faith-formation program for young people in our church to:

1. Experience worship in our faith community as well as other faith communities;
2. Engage in local mission projects.

During the past month of January, the **F.A.C.E. Group** participated in:

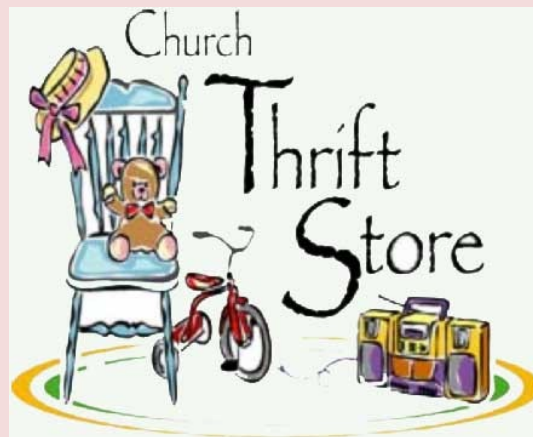
1. Caribbean worship in our sanctuary on January 14;
2. Mennonite church service in Mendon, MA on January 28.

The **F.A.C.E. Group** activities started on the first Sunday of Advent, December 3, 2023, and will conclude with a Service of Confirmation on Palm Sunday, March 24, 2024.

Rev. Barbara is planning, leading and facilitating all **F.A.C.E. Group** events. She is assisted by Christian Education Committee representatives as well as by family members of the participants.

Prayers and encouragement from church friends and members are appreciated while the young people explore the meaning of faith and the power of caring.

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**GRAFTON THRIFT SHOP
VOLUNTEERS FOR FEBRUARY 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.

Feb.	1	Joanne Hable 11 a.m. - 1 p.m.
		Lorraine Swanson 1 p.m. - 3 p.m.
	8	April Lane
	15	Joanne Hable 11 a.m. - 1 p.m.
		Lorraine Swanson 1 p.m. - 3 p.m.
	22	Melanie Peppard
	29	April Lane 11 a.m. - 1 p.m.
		Lynne Flanagan-Tsombakos 1 p.m. - 3 p.m.

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

Feb.	3	April Lane (shop closing early at 2 p.m.)
	10	Diane Lalone
	17	Susan Filippone
	24	Lynne Flanagan-Tsombakos 11 a.m. - 1 p.m.
		April Lane 1 p.m. - 3 p.m.

Love is in the air at the Grafton Thrift Shop this month! Stop in to pick up some Valentine's Day décor or a gift for your sweetheart! You'll fall in love with our nifty thrifty prices!

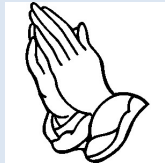
Are you looking for a volunteer opportunity to help with our church's mission and the community? The Thrift Shop is seeking new volunteers who may help on Tuesday mornings to sort through donations or to work in the shop for 2 or 4 hours on Thursdays or Saturdays, once or twice a month. Please contact April Lane at aprild5850@yahoo.com 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 or at 508-839-5850 (home) or 508-596-8582 (cell).



February Birthdays

Mark Tsombakos	2/8	Lois Scott	2/9	Emma Hise	2/10
Andrew Tsombakos	2/12	Bob Howell	2/27		



CARE AND CONCERN CIRCLE *February 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:

Uncle Than	Steven	Linda
Kelli M.	Mike	Donald and Vidia
Bruce	Tony P.	Jen K.
Louise	Paul V.	Uncle Peter
Tim M.	Mary S.	June
Family of Lee Paine	Frank P.	



<https://www.facebook.com/UCCGrafton/>

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCD6O7WxciXwlnx1Ho1GVngg/videos>

<https://twitter.com/GraftonUCC>

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

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WORSHIP SERVICES: SUNDAYS, 10 a.m.