

SHARING THE LIGHT

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



Volume 5, Number 2

FEBRUARY 2023 EDITION

Dear members and friends of our Congregational Church of Grafton:

Famous last words.

One's final words before one's final breath may be mournful, soulful or mirthful...or all three.

Consider these famous last words spoken by famous figures in human history:

Don't cry for me. I go where music is born. (Johann Sebastian Bach; composer)

I must go. The fog is rising. (Emily Dickinson; poet)

Turn me over. I'm done on this side. (Lawrence of Rome; deacon)

I'm about to—or I am going to—die. Either expression is correct.
(Fr. Dominique Boujour; priest and grammarian)



Our month of February brims with special holidays and Holy Days:

Groundhog Day – February 2

Valentine's Day – February 14

President's Day – February 20

Mardi Gras – February 21

Ash Wednesday – February 22

The Holy Day known as Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of the liturgical season of Lent. During this 40-day season, from Ash Wednesday to sundown on Holy Thursday, the faithful are invited to engage in purposeful contemplation, in acts of kindness and in abstinence from luxuries—as a way to prepare spiritually for the event of the Lord's Resurrection at Easter.

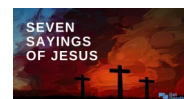
This year, as a Lenten scriptural study, our faith community will engage in a seven-week sermon series on Sunday mornings, based on the *Seven Last Words of Christ*:

- 1 - *Father, forgive them, for they don't know what they are doing.* (Luke 23:34) – February 19
- 2 - *Today you will be with me in paradise.* (Luke 23:43) – February 26
- 3 - *Woman, here is your son....Here is your mother.* (John 19:26-27) – March 5
- 4 - *My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?* (Matthew 27:46) – March 12
- 5 - *I am thirsty.* (John 19:28) – March 19
- 6 - *It is finished.* (John 19:30) – March 26
- 7 - *Father, into your hands, I commend my spirit.* (Luke 23:46) – April 2

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This month and throughout the sacred season of Lent, join our faith community on Sunday mornings (in-person or online) for a seven-week contemplative journey on the *Seven Last Words of Christ*, as they were uttered from the cross.

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Shove from the Dove

Beside you 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 5, 2023, at 11:30 a.m.

the Annual Meeting of the Congregation will be held to vote on the following articles:

1. Accept the 2022 Church Annual Report
2. Election of Church Officers and New Committee Members
3. Accept the 2023 Church Budget
4. Approve the new church Mission Statement

We, the Congregational Church of Grafton,
Celebrate God's presence and love,
Connect to God, one another, and the community,
Affirm our journeys and unique gifts,
Share hope, healing, and spiritual growth.

5. Adjournment

A quorum of 25 members is required.

The Annual Congregational Meeting will be held remotely via Zoom only.

To join the Zoom Meeting using the Zoom app, use the following link:

<https://blueprintmedicines.zoom.us/j/92736969852?pwd=N29oS3pkekh2NjVUWEVJRWM1WEFZQT09>

Meeting ID: 927 3696 9852

Passcode: 688079

If you are unable to use the Zoom app, you may join the meeting using your phone only (without video access):

Dial 301-715-8592, or toll free 1-877-369-0926

Meeting ID: 927 3696 9852

Passcode: 688079

If you have any difficulty joining the meeting, please text or call Bob McLean at 508-494-7629.

The Cabinet of the Church

Bob McLean, Church Moderator
Elizabeth Torres, Church Treasurer

Holy Happenings in February!

*Faith-building events in our faith community
during In-Person and Online Services on Sunday mornings at 10 a.m.*

Join us at: facebook.com/UCCGrafton/

February 5 = Annual Meeting Sunday and “Whatever” Sermon #6

Message: *Whatever Is Commendable?*

On this Sunday, when we conduct our Annual Congregational Meeting, join us as we consider “Whatever is commendable,” the final message in our Scripture-based Sermon Series—the “Whatevers” in Philippians 4:8.

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

**NOTE: Annual Congregational Meeting
is scheduled for 11:30 a.m. by Zoom.**

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February 12 = “Listen, Learn and Live” Sunday

**Speakers: Mrs. Lorraine Swanson,
Mr. Jonathan Filippone and Mrs. Lynne Flanagan-Tsombakos**

Theme: *We’ve Got Love!*

On our second “Listen, Learn and Live” Sunday of 2023, join us for three mini-messages on living, loving and learning, presented by three church members.

Likewise, our “Souper Bowl” Canned Soup Drive concludes.

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February 19 = Forgiveness Sunday and First Word of Seven Last Words of Christ

Message: *Father, Forgive Them*

On our intentionally designated “Forgiveness Sunday,” join us for the first message of a seven-week Lenten series:

The Seven Last Words of Christ.

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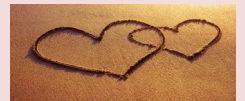
February 26 = First Sunday of Lent and Second Word of Seven Last Words of Christ

Message: *Today You Will Be with Me*

On our first Sunday in the season of Lent, join us for the second message of our seven-week Lenten series:

The Seven Last Words of Christ.

commendable





The Sound of Music...in the Month of March!

Let's all sing and ring for Easter Sunday!

Youth and adults of **all** musical abilities are invited
to share vocal skills and handbell skills!

Six FAQs:

1. Q: When and where do I come...if I want to sing?

A: Beginning Sunday morning, March 5, at 9 a.m., come to our sanctuary when we will practice singing for Easter Sunday, April 9.

2. Q: What if I have friends...who want to sing?

A: Invite your friends (church membership not required) to come join us.

3. Q: How many Sundays must I come...if I want to sing?

A: Rise and shine on four Sundays in March and two Sundays in April:

March 5
March 12
March 19
March 26
April 2
April 9

4. Q: What if I miss a Sunday rehearsal...and still want to sing?

A: Miss a rehearsal? Not a problem! Simply come to as many rehearsals as you may. Together, as an Easter Chorus, we may practice, prepare and present inspirational music on Easter Sunday!

5. Q: What if...I want to ring bells?

A. Handbell Choir will begin rehearsals after church (at 11:22 a.m.), starting March 5 and concluding April 9. You may sing. You may ring. You may sing and ring!

6. Q: Whom do I contact...if I want to sing and/or if I want to ring bells?

A: By Sunday, February 26, email your interest in singing and ringing to Donna Blanchard:
011donna@gmail.com

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Six Sundays + Six Rehearsals = Significant music and harmony

Together, let us bring the sound of music and unity of community into Easter Sunday!

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Sharing-the-Light in February: “Souper Bowl” Canned Soup Drive

Ongoing until Super Bowl Sunday, February 12

No one is useless who lightens the burdens of another. (Charles Dickens)

During 46 weeks of each calendar year, our congregation supports the local Grafton Food Bank by collecting these requested items:

Canned fruit
Canned beans
Peanut Butter
Coffee

Solid white tuna in water
Cereal (Rice Krispies and Cheerios)
Toothpaste (4 oz. and larger)
Toothbrushes (2-pack)

However, during the four weeks of January and the first two weeks February, our family of faith and all organizations who meet in our church facilities (Scouts, Twelve-Step groups and more) contribute to our yearly “**Souper Bowl**” **Canned Soup Drive**, which also supports the Grafton Food Bank.

Our 5th **Annual Souper Bowl Canned Soup Drive**, which began on January 8, will conclude on February 12.

Canned soup donations may be placed in the **Souper Bowl Canned Soup Basket** in our Church Kitchen during the first two weeks of February or on the **Souper Bowl Table** in the sanctuary on Sunday mornings.

Our **goal** for our **Souper Bowl Canned Soup Drive** is **570 cans of soup** (for Super Bowl LVII).

**Bless you for helping to provide warm nourishment to others
during our coldest weeks of winter!**

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Sharing the Fellowship: Food Brings People Together

Food brings people together on many levels. It is nourishment for the soul and the body.

Sharing the Fellowship brings people together—both physically and spiritually—when we share nourishment with one another after our time of worship on Sunday mornings.

How may you “bring people together” through **Sharing the Fellowship**?

1. On a Sunday morning, arrive at church by 9:45 a.m.
2. Bring: 2 dozen edible treats (example: cookies, muffins, sweet rolls and fruit)
 Half gallon of fruit juice (Apple or mixed berry is most popular.)
 Quart of Half & Half (for coffee and tea)
3. Place food items requiring refrigeration into our Church Refrigerator.
4. Assist the Deacon-of-the-Day in setting out:
 Coffee cups Napkins Condiments
 Drink cups Paper plates Pitcher for Half & Half cream

Place your name on the **Sharing the Fellowship** Sign-Up Sheets in Fellowship Hall!

*Blessings to you for “bringing people together” by **Sharing the Fellowship!***

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Gratitude for Giving at Christmas
Letter of Thanks from Pernet Family Health Service

To all members of the family of faith at the Congregational Church of Grafton:

What generosity you shared at Christmas time with our local families in need! God's blessings to each of you who made Christmas joy possible!

Your Mission and Outreach Committee (Neston Melville-Jones and Barbara Gow) share with you the following letter of gratitude from the Pernet Family Health Service:

* * *

Dear friends at the Congregational Church of Grafton, UCC:

Thank you for your donation of gifts this holiday season. With your help, we provided presents to 372 families for their children to open on Christmas morning, or for the children to receive an exciting surprise, if their family does not celebrate the holiday of Christmas.

The week before Christmas, we learned about a particular family in need. The mother was planning to cancel Christmas because she couldn't afford it. But her two young daughters, age 3 and 6, were looking forward to celebrating. The mother's words were: "I was just going to pretend we missed Christmas because I literally had nothing for them."

We quickly mobilized and put together toys and clothing for the mother and her daughters. One of our employees delivered the gifts just before Christmas.

The mother was overwhelmed with appreciation. After Christmas, she called our service office three times to thank us for our help.

At Pernet, this describes how we try to serve the community. Holidays may bring joy and excitement for some. But they may bring stress and pain for others.

We are grateful that these two young girls and more than a thousand other children were able to celebrate Christmas with a few gifts and also with being surrounded by people who love them.

Thank you for your part in making this happen.

**Sincerely,
Sheila Dooley
Executive Director**



**GRAFTON THRIFT SHOP
VOLUNTEERS FOR FEBRUARY 2023**

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.	2	Joanne Hable 11 a.m. - 1 p.m.
		Lorraine Swanson 1 p.m. - 3 p.m.
	9	Melanie Peppard
	16	Joanne Hable 11 a.m. - 1 p.m.
		Lorraine Swanson 1 p.m. - 3 p.m.
	23	Melanie Peppard

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

Feb.	4	Susan Filippone 11 a.m. - 1 p.m.
		April Lane 1 p.m. - 3 p.m.
	11	Melanie Peppard
	18	Diane Lalone
	25	Susan Filippone 11 a.m. - 1 p.m.
		Lynne Flanagan-Tsombakos 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!

Are you looking for a volunteer opportunity to help with the 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 or at 508-839-5850.

Donations are accepted 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.



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 2023

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:

Kathy

Louise and George

Kathleen

Linda

Donald and Vidia

Kerry

Uncle Peter

Lucille

Bruce

Kitty

Ron



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<https://twitter.com/GraftonUCC>

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

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Monthly Newsletter of the Congregational Church of Grafton

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February

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WORSHIP SERVICES: SUNDAYS, 10 a.m.