

SHARING THE LIGHT

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



Volume 5, Number 10

OCTOBER 2023 EDITION

Dear friends and members of our Congregational Church of Grafton:

Faith – noun; a sense of trust or a belief.

Faithful – adjective; loyal, steadfast.

To be faithful - infinitive verb complement; a state of being loyal or steadfast.

Within our faith community's vast archives of worship services and publications, the words “faith” and “faithful” as well as the phrase “to be faithful” are generously printed and incessantly spoken. But, beyond dictionary definitions, what meaning do those two words and that one phrase hold in our daily, weekly, monthly and yearly lives?

Holy Scripture offers meaningful insights:

***Faith** is the assurance of things hoped for,
the conviction of things not seen. (Hebrews 11:1)*

*The master said, “Well done, good and **faithful** servant. You have been **faithful** in a few things.
Now you are in charge of many things. (Matthew 25:23)*

*It is required of them, who have been given trust, **to be faithful**. (1 Corinthians 4:2)*

Sometimes humor may be as defining as scriptural analysis:

*A woman of **faith** is one, who, when her feet hit the floor in the morning,
the Devil says, “Oh no! She's up!”*

*There are three **faithful** friends:
an old spouse, an old dog and ready money. (Benjamin Franklin)*

***To be faithful** is to trust that the batteries in your smoke detector
won't die at 2 a.m.*



In this month of October, we begin our annual Season of Commitment. In this reflective and responsive four-week season, we ask three deep questions: As a faith community--

Who are we?

Who is God calling us to be?

How do we live and give in order to be who God calls us to be?

For our 2024 Commitment Season, our theme is:

To be faithful, share a hand-full, a soul-full and a life-full.

Our Commitment Season includes these four Sundays: October 22; October 29; November 6; and November 12. Commitment Sunday is scheduled for November 12.

Won't you share in this scriptural and sometimes humorous journey on how **to be faithful**?



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

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Gratitude for Those Who Shared Deeply throughout the Season of Summer

Dear friends and members of our faith community:

For everything there is a season and a time for every purpose under heaven. (Ecclesiastes 3:1)

Beginning in late April and continuing through early September, our congregation reflected on 26 different seasons, as recorded in the wisdom literature of Ecclesiastes, Chapter 3. Through our study of scripture and our observation of divine intervention in human history, we discovered how our lives connect significantly with one another within our family of faith. In this time, we acknowledge those who shared deeply throughout the season of Summer.

Bountiful gratitude to our **Thrift Shop Team**: *Elaine Allen; Susan Filippone; Barbara Gow; Joanne Hable; Amy Koskinen; Diane Lalone; April Lane; Hope Miller; Melanie Peppard; Kim Stewart; Lorraine Swanson; Lynne Flanagan-Tsombakos; and Megan Webber.*

Heart-felt gratitude to our **Board of Trustees**: *Erik Coldwell; Jon Filippone; Joanne Hable; Amy Koskinen; and Bob McLean.*

Enthusiastic gratitude to our **Music Committee**: *Junya Awata; Alison Balfour; Donna Blanchard; Luke Desautels; Betty Mack; Ron Sainio; and Lynne Flanagan-Tsombakos.*

Abundant gratitude to our **WOW Factor Team**: *Donna Blanchard; Joanne Hable; Sue Howell; and Kathy Vandenengel.*

Year-round gratitude to our **“Prime Minister”/Administrative Assistant**: *Kris Graham.*

Profound gratitude to our **Mission and Outreach Committee**: *China Boyd; Lori Horton; Sue Howell; and Neston Melville-Jones.*

Deep gratitude to our **Deacons**: *Amy Coldwell; Joanne Hable; Connie Hopkins; Sue Howell; Craig Peacock; Kim Stewart; and Lorraine Swanson.*

Resounding gratitude to our **“Listen, Learn and Live” Speakers**: *Kayson Jones; Dr. Craig McNally; Courtney Smith; and Teenea Berry-Walters.*

Tremendous gratitude to our **Rainbow Chair Angel**: *Lorraine Swanson.*

Sincere gratitude to our **Communications and Tech Team**: *Larry Drew; Andrew Tsombakos; Mark Tsombakos; and Kathy Vandenengel.*

Ongoing gratitude to our **Cabinet members**: *Donna Blanchard; Erik Coldwell; Joanne Hable; Connie Hopkins; Sue Howell; Tracy LeMaire; Rob Lane; Craig Peacock; Lorraine Swanson; Elizabeth Torres; and Kathy Vandenengel.*

Exuberant gratitude to our **Fellowship and Membership Committee**: *Amy Coldwell; Susan Filippone; Bob Howell; Carrie Peacock; and Lorraine Swanson.*

Overflowing gratitude to our **Sharing-the-Fellowship Refreshment Providers**: *Penny Cahill; Donna Caracino; Christina DeMaio; Luke Desautels; Susan Filippone; Rian Fisk; Barbara Gow; Connie Hopkins; Norma LaMarche; and Lynne Flanagan-Tsombakos.*

Beside you in our season of gratitude,
Rev. Barbara

Holy Happenings in October!

*Faith-deepening events within our congregation
during in-person and online services on Sunday mornings at 10 a.m.*

Join us online at: facebook.com/UCCGrafton/

October 1 = “Heavenly Sunday” and Lord's Prayer – Sermon #2

Message: *Heaven – Then and Now*

Gather with us on “Heavenly Sunday”

as we consider ancient and modern concepts of heaven
in the second sermon of our *Lord's Prayer* Series.

Our monthly Sharing-the-Light Food Collection
welcomes non-perishable food items for the Grafton Food Bank.
Likewise, we share the Feast for All (aka Holy Communion).

* * *

October 8 = “Name Sunday” and Lord's Prayer – Sermon #3

Message: *What's in a Name?*

Gather with us on “Name Sunday”

as we consider the power of God's name
in our ongoing Bible Study/Sermon Series on the *Lord's Prayer*.

* * *

October 15 = “Kingdom Come” Sunday

Message: *God's Rule and God Rules*

Gather with us on “Kingdom Come Sunday”

as we consider the import of “thy kingdom come, thy will be done”
in the context of the *Lord's Prayer*.

* * *

October 22 = “Listen, Learn and Live” Sunday and First Sunday of Commitment Season

Worship Co-Leaders: Mr. Kayson Jones and Mr. Neston Melville-Jones

Message: *To Be Faithful, Share a Soul-Full!*

Gather with us on the first Sunday of our Commitment Season
as Kayson Jones and Neston Melville-Jones
facilitate an engaging, interactive dialogue
on how we may be faithful to our God and our faith community
by sharing deeply from our souls.

* * *

October 29 = “Hands On!” Sunday and Second Sunday of Commitment Season

Message: *To Be Faithful, Share a Hand-Full!*

Gather with us on the second Sunday of our Commitment Season
as we reflect on a sacred story, “Grandma's Hands,”
and as we consider how faithfulness to God and one another
may be shared through the work of our hands.





Which Discussion Will You Join?

Discussion groups, as promised by the WOW committee, will begin the week of October 8. Dates and times for the groups to meet will be determined based on the availability of interested members of each discussion. Sign up now to have a say in the scheduling of your group!

Prayer will be the focus of the first group. This group will meet weekly for 6 weeks, on Tuesday or Thursday, beginning the week of October 8. The discussions will be centered around the book, *Learning to Pray: a Guide for Everyone*, by James Martin, SJ and will be led by Sue Howell.

The second group will look **environmental issues** and what we can do. The book, *Cathedral on Fire* by Brooks Berndt, will center this discussion led by Joanne Hable. The group will meet on 3 alternating weeks beginning October 8. Time and day will be decided.

Mental health will be the focus of the third group discussion. Using the book *Atomic Habits* by James Clear, Gabrielle McLean will lead a discussion on forming habits that may benefit your well-being. This group will meet twice on either a Wednesday or Thursday evening.

How may I sign up? We will offer several ways to indicate your interest in a group.

Use the sign-up form found in your Sunday Church bulletin on October 1.

Contact one of the group leaders: suchow6oak@aol.com, jnhable49@live.com, or gabmclean2@gmail.com

We look forward to hearing from you!

The WOW FACTOR – Donna Blanchard, Joanne Hable, Sue Howell, Kathy Vandenbergel



**Save the date! Our annual Women's Retreat will be held on October 20 - 22, 2023
at Edwards House in Framingham, MA.**

All women are invited to attend this wonderful gathering of faith-filled women from our church. The cost for the full retreat this year is \$225, which includes your room and all meals (Friday dinner through Sunday lunch). You may pay in installments or in full at any time. Make the check payable to the Congregational Church of Grafton, with "Women's Retreat" in the memo line. Full payment will be due by October 1, 2023.

This will be a planned schedule of inspiration and discussion, led by Rev. Barbara, who will focus on the theme "P-R-A-Y: A Four-Letter Word? Or a Four-Step Event?" We will schedule time for quiet reflection, as well as time to connect with others.

The photo is from our women's retreat in 2021.

Thanks to all of you! Contact any of us with questions.

Women's Retreat Committee

Connie Hopkins (cmhopkins1@verizon.net), Betty Mack (mackbetty@verizon.net),
Kathy Vandenengel (momv17@yahoo.com)



The 44th Harvest Fair and Apple Pie Social is in the books now and may go down as one of the soggiest. We still had fun and fulfilled our mission of creating community.

Thank you to each and every one of you who helped us by volunteering your time, donating items, or attending the Fair, despite the rain. We couldn't do it without your generosity.

We hope to see you again next year. (We're praying for drier weather in 2024.) Please be sure to read the separate email that was sent on Wednesday with all the Fair details and photos!

Fair committee: Joanne, Sue, Barbara, Connie, Kathy

Sharing the Light: Integral Part of a Journey

Travel light. Live light. Spread the light. Be the light. (Yogi Bhajan)

Our faith community's Mission Statement includes this key affirmation: To affirm our journeys.

The Congregational Church of Grafton acknowledges the vital role of sharing Light in the course and the context of a journey of faith. Our family of faith “affirms journeys” by inviting contributions to our local Grafton Food Bank. These are the Food Bank's publicized needs:

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)

Every first Sunday of the month, church friends and members may bring forward these items at the time of the Sharing-the-Light Food Collection in our morning service. During the week, a “Sharing-the-Light” Food Basket in Fellowship Hall receives these same contributions. Every month, all donations are faithfully delivered to the Grafton Food Bank.

Bless you for sharing the Light while on your journey of faith!

* * * * *



Fellowship → Spiritual Growth

Without food, we die. Without fellowship, life is not worth living. (Laurie Colwin)

The newly adopted Mission Statement of our church urges and encourages all within our faith community to “share spiritual growth.”

On Sunday mornings, after our time of faith-sharing, ***Sharing the Fellowship*** is a worthy opportunity to “share spiritual growth.”

How may you “share spiritual growth” through ***Sharing the Fellowship?***

1. On a selected Sunday morning, arrive at church by 9:50 a.m.
2. Bring: 3 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 that require cold storage into the Church Refrigerator.
4. Write your name on the ***Sharing the Fellowship*** Sign-Up Sheets in Fellowship Hall.

*We need worship for our spirits and fellowship for our souls.
Bless you for “sharing spiritual growth” by ***Sharing the Fellowship!****



GRAFTON THRIFT SHOP

VOLUNTEERS FOR OCTOBER 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.

Oct. 5	Joanne Hable 11 a.m. - 1 p.m. Lorraine Swanson 1 p.m. - 3 p.m.
12	April Lane
19	Joanne Hable 11 a.m. - 1 p.m. Lorraine Swanson 1 p.m. - 3 p.m.
26	Melanie Peppard

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

Oct. 7	April Lane
14	Diane Lalone
21	Lynne Flanagan-Tsombakos
28	Joanne Hable

October is here and the Grafton Thrift Shop is offering some spooky good deals on Halloween décor! Stop in this month to see what's new! Get out with the family and enjoy the fall foliage. We have a couple of pairs of kids' hiking boots (size 2 & 3) and two kid-sized Kelty sleeping bags. For women, there are a pair of LL Bean boots in size 8. Check out many of our other "new to you" treasures at our always 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 want 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 508-596-8582 (cell).



October Birthdays

Lori Horton	10/5	Rick Anderson	10/9	Donna Caracino	10/19
Matthew Koskinen		10/26	Mark Capuzziello	10/31	



CARE AND CONCERN CIRCLE *October 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:

Donald and Vidia
Louise and George
Gary
Mary S.

Bruce
Cara
Uncle Peter
June
Paul V.

Tony P.
Jen K.
Tim M.
Kelli M.



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