

# SHARING THE LIGHT

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



Volume 7, Number 1

**JANUARY 2025 EDITION**

Good people of the Congregational Church of Grafton:

At this, the beginning of 2025, New Year expressions and incantations may still be reverberating in our ears and in our souls.

A New Year's toast:

*May your joys be many, and your tears be few.  
Peace to the world, and much love to you.*  
(Patty Forbes Cheng)

A New Year's prayer:

*May we sift wrong from right,  
deceit from strength, in order to show courage and Light.  
May we live with wholeness all of our days,  
to be loving and kind, as we give God praise.*  
(Norma Woodbridge)

A New Year's resolution:

*Look back fondly; look ahead bravely.  
Give generously; receive graciously.  
Exit toxicity. Depart from maligners.  
Embark on new beginnings.*  
(Sandra E. McBride)



Holy Scripture offers a wealth of wisdom for embarking on new beginnings in the New Year:

*I am about to do a new thing. Now it springs forth. Do you not perceive it?  
I will make a way in the wilderness and carve rivers in the desert.*  
(Isaiah 43:19)

*A new heart I will give you, and a new spirit I will put within you.  
I will remove from your body the heart of stone, and I will give you a heart of flesh.*  
(Ezekiel 36:26)

*Commit your new work to God, and your plans will be blessed.  
All those who detract from your plans are an abomination to God.  
Be assured: These detractors will not go unpunished.*  
(Proverbs 16:3-5)

In this New Year, may we—as people of faith—invest in more than a new monthly calendar. May we invest in and commit to changes in how we live so we may renew our minds, our hearts, our bodies and our spirits.

New beginnings are the best gifts of each New Year.



*Shove from the Dove*

In the journey of faith,  
*Rev. Dr. Barbara Therese*

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***In a Season of Thanksgiving and Recovering:  
Gratitude for Care and Concern***

To all who shared expressions of care and concern during my season of illness and injury:

Bountiful thanks for your written and spoken kindness during my debilitating bout of medical emergencies in mid- to late December.

Kindness heals. The smallest act of kindness is worth more than the greatest of intentions. Every small, selfless act nudges the world onto a more hopeful path.

In this season, may you know that your kindness abundantly blessed my path.

Faithfully and gratefully,  
*REV. BARBARA*



***In a Season of Remembrance and Thanksgiving:  
"In Memoriam Sunday" on January 26, 2025***

Throughout the past five years, during the month of January, the Congregational Church of Grafton has honored a newer tradition: Remembering and giving thanks for the lives of church members and friends who passed from this life to greater life in the previous calendar year.

Called "In Memoriam Sunday," this sacred event will again be conducted on Sunday morning, January 26, 2025, at 10 a.m. in the church sanctuary.

This year, "In Memoriam Sunday" will remember and give thanks for the lives of:

**Leslie (Lee) Mae Ward Paine**  
**Ronald (Runk) Arthur Fraser (uncle of Mr. Rob Lane)**  
**Ann Comfort Cranshaw**

On "In Memoriam Sunday," friends and members of the faith community are encouraged to come and to share comforting support with the families and extended families of those who will be honored that morning.

*Bring your caring presence to "In Memoriam Sunday," January 26, at 10 a.m.*



***Important Announcement:***

***Annual Congregational Meeting***

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**DRAFT-WARRANT**

**TO THE MEMBERS OF THE**

**CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF GRAFTON, MASSACHUSETTS:**

The members are hereby notified that on Sunday, February 9, 2025, 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 2024 Church Annual Report

Election of Church Officers

Vote to accept the 2025 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



**Attention Church Committee Chairs:**

All Annual Reports are due into the church office no later than January 22, 2025.

## ***Holy Happenings in January!***

*Refresh and reflect on your faith each Sunday morning at 10 a.m.!  
Come in-person or connect online!*

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

### **January 5 = Mother-in-Law Sunday**

#### **and Healing Stories of Jesus – Sermon #1**

**Message: 11<sup>th</sup> Commandment: Love Your Mother-in-Law!**

Begin the New Year with a healing spirit!

Gather with us as we begin a new six-sermon series  
on healing stories of Jesus,  
recorded in the Gospel of Mark.

Our annual Souper Bowl Canned Soup Drive begins  
with donations benefiting the Grafton Food Bank.

Likewise, we celebrate the Feast for All (i.e., the Lord's Supper).

\* \* \*

### **January 12 = Healing Stories of Jesus – Sermon #2**

#### **Message: *Jesus as Demon-Buster***

Continue the New Year with a healing spirit!

Gather with us as we continue our new sermon series  
on six healing stories of Jesus,  
recorded in the Gospel of Mark.

\* \* \*

### **January 19 = Healing Stories of Jesus – Sermon #3**

#### **Message: *Priorities, Priorities!***

Continue on a healing journey in 2025!

Gather with us as we engage more deeply  
on six healing stories of Jesus,  
recorded in the Gospel of Mark.

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### **January 26 = “In Memoriam Sunday”**

#### **Message: *For Everything There Is a Season***

Share your care and your comfort  
in our annual Time of Remembrance and Thanksgiving  
to honor the lives of church members and friends  
whom we lost during calendar year 2024.



***Sharing the Light → Souper Bowl Canned Soup Drive in 2025***

*Give Light, and the darkness will disappear of itself.*

Throughout the first seven weeks of our New Year (January 1 through February 17, 2025), the Congregational Church of Grafton and the organizations who meet within the church facility (i.e., Scouting packs and troops, Twelve-Step Recovery groups and the Voices of God Ministry) are invited to support the mission of the Grafton Food Bank with a short-term, focused goal:

***The monthly Sharing-the-Light Food Collection***  
will temporarily morph into  
***a seven-week Souper Bowl Canned Soup Drive!***

From early January to mid-February, kindly bring contributions of canned soup to the Sharing-the-Light Food Collection on the first Sundays of January and February (January 5 and February 2) and on weekdays (January 1 to February 17) to the Grafton Food Bank Collection Basket located in the Fellowship Hall of the church.

***Goal for this year's Souper Bowl Canned Soup Drive?***  
***300 cans of soup!***

*In the midst of darkness, Light persists.*  
(Mahatma Gandhi)

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**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!



### **WHITE SOCKS FOR WORCESTER FELLOWSHIP**

This month, we will be wrapping up our successful collection of as many pairs of men's and women's large white socks as we can! At the end of January 2025, we'll give you our final count! So, there is still time to bring new pairs of white socks to the church. Place them in the bin in the Church Kitchen labeled "Socks for Worcester Fellowship."

### **BAGGED LUNCHES FOR THURSDAY CAFÉ**

Watch for the Sign-Up Genius to donate lunch items or to volunteer to help make bagged lunches in the Church Kitchen at 10:30 a.m. on Thursday, January 17.

### **CHRISTMAS GIVING TREE**

Thank you to all for the generous outpouring of gifts. We had 40 tags, and all of the gift requests were filled! That's A LOT!! All were delivered to Pernet Family Health Services and Crescent Manor Nursing Home, and every one of the gifts made someone's Christmas holiday extra special.

### **END-OF-YEAR MONETARY SUPPORT**

In addition to the numerous physical donations and volunteer hours offered by the generous members and friends of our church, the MOC has determined that the following organizations would receive additional support of monetary donations at the end of 2024:

UCC Wider Church Ministries - for Middle East Support

Church World Service - for Emergency Response

WAMS (Worcester Area Mission Society, UCC)

Worcester Fellowship - Thursday Café

Pernet Family Health Services

Worcester County Food Bank

Grafton Food Bank

Thank you to all for continued help and support!  
The Mission Outreach Committee



## GRAFTON THRIFT SHOP

### VOLUNTEERS FOR JANUARY 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.

<p>Jan. 2 Joanne Hable 11 a.m. - 1 p.m. Lorraine Swanson 1 p.m. - 3 p.m. 9 April Lane 11 a.m. - 1 p.m. Lynne Flanagan-Tsombakos 1 p.m. - 3 p.m. 16 Joanne Hable 11 a.m. - 1 p.m. Lorraine Swanson 1 p.m. - 3 p.m. 23 Melanie Peppard 30 Joanne Hable 11 a.m. - 1 p.m. Lorraine Swanson 1 p.m. - 3 p.m.</p>
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Saturday - 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

<p>Jan. 4 Amy Coldwell 11 Diane Lalone 18 Susan Filippone 25 Lynne Flanagan-Tsombakos 11 a.m. - 1 p.m. April Lane 1 p.m. - 3 p.m.</p>
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Thank you to everyone who supported the Grafton Thrift Shop in 2024 as a customer, a donor or both! 2024 was a success and we look forward to serving the community in 2025!

January is here, and it's the perfect time to kickstart those New Year's resolutions! This year, let the Grafton Thrift Shop be your partner in success! Want to get fit? Check out our workout wear that will inspire you to hit the gym! Are you resolving to save money? Our "nifty thrifty" prices make it easy to stick to your budget! Eager to give back to the community? We would love to have you as a volunteer, helping us sort donations or assist customers! Let's make this year your best one yet at the Grafton Thrift Shop!

Are you looking for a volunteer opportunity to start off the new year to help with our church's mission and the community? The Thrift Shop seeks 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 [april5850@yahoo.com](mailto: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](mailto:april5850@yahoo.com) or at 508-839-5850 (home) or at 508-596-8582 (cell).



## January Birthdays

Gabrielle McLean	1/3	Lynne Flanagan-Tsombakos	1/4	Alison Balfour	1/5
Junya Awata	1/7	Donna Blanchard	1/11	Joey Drew	1/20
Sam Capuzziello	1/26	Ayla LeMaire	1/29		



## CARE AND CONCERN CIRCLE *January 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:

Nicole	Denise	Richard
Mike	Adam	Sally B.
Bruce	Darlene S.	Lynn
Benjamin	Tim M.	Lucyna
Donald and Vidia	Amanda	Tori
Scott D.	Lynn D.	Jeff F.
Ashley S.	Dick F.	Healing for Charlotte
Steven	Barbara and Ed	Paul
	LGBTQ+ Community	
Everyone who is afraid, sick or alone	Smith Family following tragic accident	
One who is battling addiction	For hope with a difficult medical diagnosis	



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

<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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**WORSHIP SERVICES: SUNDAYS, 10 a.m.**