



GROVELAND  
CONGREGATIONAL  
CHURCH

# The Bell

4 King Street  
Groveland, MA 01834  
[www.grovelanducc.org](http://www.grovelanducc.org) 978-372-3463

March- May 2019



**THIS YEAR'S LENTEN STUDY WILL BE LIKE NO OTHER!**

JOIN THE CALL FOR THE **KINDNESS FASH MOB!**

*BE READY TO PRACTICE KINDNESS IN AN INSTANT. EACH WEEK DURING LENT WE WILL DO A RANDOM ACT OF KINDNESS.  
JOIN THE THURSDAY CONFERENCE CALL SO YOU WILL KNOW WHAT TO BRING AS WELL AS WHEN AND WHERE TO SHOW UP TO  
**PRACTICE THE ART OF KINDNESS AND LOVE.***

*MEMBERS OF THE KFM WILL PICK A WEEK TO ENACT A MOMENT OF GRACE FOR THE GROUP. (NEED HELP, JUST ASK!)*

**LENT BEGINS WITH MARCH 6 ASH WEDNESDAY SERVICE AT 7PM IN THE SANCTUARY,  
THE 1ST KFM CONFERENCE CALL WILL BE THURSDAY MARCH 7TH AT 7PM.**

IT IS UNDERSTOOD BECAUSE OF THE SHORT NOTICE NOT ALL PEOPLE WILL BE ABLE TO MAKE ALL EVENTS.

#### **How to Join?**

Each **Thursday** Night during lent ( 3/7 to 4/11)  
At **7pm** call 1-712-775-8978  
When prompted enter code 153309

#### **I missed the call! Now What?**

Goto [KFM.grovelanducc.org](http://KFM.grovelanducc.org)

On Thursday, March 7<sup>th</sup>, join the Conference Call at 7 PM. All you need to do is call 1-712-775-8978 and enter the code 153309. This should bring you into the group discussion where we can plan our Kindness Flash Mob for the upcoming week. Our hope is that by spreading love and kindness throughout our community we will experience personal fulfillment in living out the commandment that we are to love one another.

## **Palm Sunday Taizé Meditation Service**

Our next ecumenical candlelight Taizé meditation service will take place on Palm/Passion Sunday evening, April 14th at 7:30 PM. This is a wonderful way to enter into Holy Week, following Jesus during the last week of his life. We will listen to scripture, sing simple refrains, have prayers, petitions and an opportunity to sit quietly in the candlelight as we ponder Jesus' love for us. This service is ecumenical...all are welcome. Why not put the date on your calendar now!



### **Services to Make the Season Holy**

March 6	Ash Wednesday service	7pm in GCC sanctuary
March 7th to April 14th	Kindness Flash Mobs!	
Thursday, April 18	Maundy Thursday	7pm in the sanctuary
Friday, April 19th	Good Friday	7pm in the sanctuary
Sunday April 14th	Palm Sunday Taizé	7:30 pm in the sanctuary
Sunday April 20th	Sunrise Easter Service	5:45am Veasey Park
Sunday April 20th	Easter Worship Service	10am in the sanctuary

## **We have a problem with negativity.....**

This negativity is weakening us as the body of Christ, and holding us back from embracing God's future. Our congregation has been walking with it for a long time. It's like we are standing on the precipice of a cliff, slipping occasionally, almost ready to fall into the depths, but not quite falling. At the same time we have been unable to take lasting steps away from the cliff's edge. We need to...desperately.

Calling a settled pastor is not going to solve the challenges we are facing...

Calling a settled pastor is not going to grow the church...

Calling a settled pastor is not going to resolve the conflicts we have...

Calling a settled pastor is not going to make the Open and Affirming go away...

Abuse is a terrible and tricky thing. Abuse gets conflicted because of shame and guilt. You see, if a child is being abused by his or her parents, the child doesn't stop loving the parents, the child stops loving itself. The child assumes they are broken or defective in some way, and then grow up trying to hide their shame, and cover up their brokenness. In a similar way, a Congregation who has experienced abuse stops loving itself, and begins to wander about seeking someone to help them look and feel good.

This congregation has been hurt by pastors, too many times, and while the congregation is NOT responsible for the unacceptable behavior of those pastors, at the same time we take a role in how it plays out. There is a pattern the congregation follows with the pastor time and time again. It is a pattern of avoiding direct confrontation and disagreement; a pattern of mistrust and at the same time looks to the pastor to rescue the church.

Recently I had a good long chat with Rev. Patricia Long about GCC; in fact we talked about this newsletter article in depth. She encouraged me to remind you that her Ministry here was not one of calling the congregation to task, nor one of working with the congregation on the issues we have tackled during my own tenure. Her ministry with the church was one of loving you, of reminding you that God loves and embraces this congregation; that God has hope for this congregation. She wanted me to remind you that despite the fact our congregation has been betrayed and continues to stumble over negativity, we have a deep passion for mission, a willingness to serve God with our lives, and abiding concern for one another.

I believe it is these assets that will help us build a future. The path to healing and hope will not be found in a balanced budget, new members, better communication, or a settled pastor, instead it ought to be built on our strengths. It can be built on remembering and knowing that can communicate in affirming ways even though at times we fail, we can vision God's future even though at times we are blinded, and we can participate in God's mission even though at times we are filled with fear.

Lent and Easter are fast approaching, and the metaphors of Dying, Death, and Resurrection will stand before us. Join me in a prayer for the death of this negativity and old pattern so that we can step into resurrection and new life, so that we can know that God is here leading us to new life. I know this is a dangerous prayer, one that will be painful and feel like death. But death is the only way to resurrection and that is the good news that resurrection can be ours. There is more light than darkness here, there is more love than negativity, there is more hope than despair. It's not my promise to you, it's not the promise of the congregation, it is God's promise to all people.

***In Love***

***Pastor Chris***



## WORSHIP MINISTRY

I would like to take the opportunity to thank everyone who has helped with our worship services the last two years. You have been great witnesses to the love and fellowship that we offer here at GCC!

During the first quarter of 2019 Team Alt Worship began offering an alternative worship experience called "Oasis". It meets every other Sunday evening at 7PM in the Fellowship Hall and its purpose is to offer a worship experience for those who have no church experience or those who feel the traditional service does not speak to them.

Beginning in January of 2019 we now have a knitting/crocheting basket in the back of the church for those who listen better when doing something with their hands. There are simple patterns available for hats and scarves. As you knit or crochet, we encourage you to pray for the person who will receive this object. If you have any questions, please see Laurel Puchalski or Linda Paulet.

Upcoming services at GCC include Ash Wednesday (March 6), Palm Sunday (April 14), Maundy Thursday (April 18), Good Friday (April 19) and Easter Sunday (April 21). Our Easter services will include a Sunrise service at Veasey Park (time to be determined) and our Traditional service at 10AM.

We will once again be holding our Worship on Wednesday services this summer beginning June 26 through August 14. The feedback from last summer was very positive and it was decided to extend the Wednesday services for this coming summer.

Peace and Love,

Linda Paulet, Minister of Worship

### *Sing for Easter!*

How would you like to join our fun-loving, welcoming, helpful and dedicated choir for the great Easter feast?! Did you ever hear the expression, "When you sing you pray twice"?

Give yourself the gift of this short term commitment by singing with the choir for Easter. Check with Kathleen to find out exactly when we will be working on the Easter music. Rehearsals are on Wednesdays from 7:30 until 9:00PM. You'll be glad you did!

### Choir Appreciation Breakfast

On Sunday, June 2nd, we will have an opportunity to show our appreciation to our youth, chime and senior choirs for their dedication all year, attending weekly rehearsals and Sunday services to help us all listen to God's voice and raise our hearts in prayer. The donation of any breakfast food is gladly accepted!



*EASTER FLOWERS: I will be taking orders on March 31 and April 7 after church for Easter Flowers. You can order 6 or 8 inch Tulips in pink, white, purple, yellow Daffodils or 6 inch Hyacinth in pink or blue. The Hyacinth will not go on the altar (due to allergies) but will be outside on the steps leading to the church. If you cannot be at church, orders can be sent to me via email [njtravel2@comcast.net](mailto:njtravel2@comcast.net) or I can be reached at 978-373-0242. Prices will be sent out once I receive them.*

*Nancy Fitzgerald*

## STEWARDSHIP MINISTRY

As the church year winds down and the Ministry Team turns over, I am reflecting on my role as the next Minister of Stewardship. My time as an “intern” with Dave Niles has most certainly been a pleasure. There has been much laughter, just a few tears, and lots of conversation about the past, the present, and the future. From my view, Dave has been energetic, knowledgeable, considerate and caring to all, and truly diligent in accomplishing the many tasks that follow this position. He truly loves this church— it’s building AND it’s people – we both do. I am honored to follow in his really big footsteps and hope to continue his legacy of service to God and to the members and friends of this congregation.

As this next exciting phase of my church life begins, it seems prudent to re-examine what Stewardship truly is and how it affects life here at GCC. I had to start by asking Alexa. She says (in part), “a steward is a person who manages property or financial affairs”. Ok—that’s seems right. Google went on to define it as “the job of supervising or taking care of something, such as a property or organization”. Again—in line with my thinking. And then I go to The Bible. This is where the idea of stewardship takes on a deeper meaning. The Bible tell us that the world is God’s Kingdom. We are to be good stewards and take care of it for him! He has entrusted us with His Kingdom – all of it. WOW. This pulls at my soul.

As humans, how do we care for His Kingdom? Give our money to pay the bills? Give our time to clean and repair the physical property? Share our talents with others? Sure-this all makes sense. We do these things at home and at our jobs so that things keep working properly. It makes sense that such things have to happen at church, too. But where do we find the drive or the energy to do these things yet again?

I do it because I have to. Something inside me tells me to get in there. It's in my soul. Get in there and freshen up a dull painted a wall. Get in there and purchase some needed supplies for a project or give money weekly. Get in there and go to a meeting to share my views. Get in there and help a friend through a troubled time. These things are not “chores” but rather expressions of my love for God. They are thanks for what I have been blessed to receive. For me, being a good steward doesn't equate to work. There is a deeper purpose – to ensure the longevity of God's Kingdom. The Bible says to be a joyful giver...but how about being a joyful steward! He gave each of us LIFE. He has given us family and friends to LOVE. He has given us forgiveness, and strength, and HOPE. How can we truly thank him for all that?

God bless you all – and thank you for the opportunity to serve. Sandy Keene

### TEAM CURB APPEAL

*It's almost time to work in the yard!  
Team Curb Appeal is up and running and  
happy to take suggestions for  
improvements to the outside of the church  
– particularly the King Street side. Please  
share your thoughts with us – Priscilla  
Styer, Jennifer Hart, Bob Lay, Sharon  
Johanson, or Sandy Keene.*



### Newly Updated space!

The downstairs room (once only the nursery) has received a face lift! Existing items were repurposed/repositioned/repainted to give the space a whole new restful yet fun look at very minimal cost. It's now a flexible space that can be used by all as the need arises. Youth meetings, nursery time, private prayers, and more.

A special thanks to Caroline and the Faith Formation Team (along with the Youth) for their open minds, and to Art Milley for providing stain for the cupboard doors.

Next project...the thrift shop bathroom update! Thanks all – Dave N and Sandy K

## Scholarship Season

There are several Scholarship Opportunities at Groveland Congregational Church.

The Scholarship Team is accepting applications for the *Maddock Scholarship*. Contact the church office or go onto our website at [www.grovelanducc.org](http://www.grovelanducc.org) for an application form. Applications must be postmarked by Wednesday May 1<sup>st</sup>.

Faith Circle is accepting application letters for two scholarships that will be presented on Baccalaureate Sunday. Following are details on each of the scholarships and application requirements:

The *Faith Circle Scholarship* is presented to the graduating high school senior who is pursuing a post-secondary education in an accredited 2 or 4-year school/college. Application is made in the form of a written letter by the candidate and should include details on the candidate's church involvement at Groveland Congregational, school involvement, community involvement and the field of study and school they are planning to attend and when. The letter should be sent to Faith Circle Scholarship Committee, Groveland Congregational Church, 4 King Street, Groveland, MA 01834 and be postmarked by Wednesday, May 1<sup>st</sup>.

The *Judy Henry Scholarship* is presented to a female church member who is returning to school for either certification of completion of requirements in a specific field of study or pursuing a 2-4 year undergraduate or post-graduate degree program. The letter of application must include information about your church involvement at GCC, information about the field of study you will be pursuing and how this education will benefit you. Letters should be sent to the Faith Circle Scholarship Committee, Groveland Congregational Church, 4 King Street, Groveland, MA 01834 and be postmarked by Wednesday, May 1<sup>st</sup>.



YOU ARE INVITED TO A  
LADIES SPRING LUNCHEON  
ON  
SATURDAY, MARCH 23, 2019  
AT 12:30 P.M.  
IN

FELLOWSHIP HALL  
GROVELAND CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH  
4 KING STREET, GROVELAND, MA

Think Spring! Pansies, Spring Magic and More!

Linda Zukas, Retail Sales Manager of Nunan's will demonstrate planting early spring containers and also some of the new upcoming varieties of annuals that you will see at their locations this Spring!

R.S.V.P. BY MARCH 15, 2019 TO

Laurel Puchalski at 978-373-1858 or [laurelpuchalski@gmail.com](mailto:laurelpuchalski@gmail.com)

LUNCHEON CATERED BY BARRY LAY

## HOSPITALITY MINISTRY

### PANERA BREAD

The Panera Bread Team continues to function. For the past five years, a member of this team has picked up the surplus bread from Panera in Newburyport on Tuesday night. On Wednesday morning the bread is taken to Emmaus and Joyful Ladle in Haverhill, and The Council on Aging in Groveland. Some of the non-bread items (cookies, pastries) are delivered to the Thrift Shop and left for Choir Rehearsal. We can always use additional members on this team. The time commitment is minimal – about 1 hour every 6 to 8 weeks. If you would like to be a part of this team, please let Ron Mertens know.



### CALLED TO CARE

In late January a group of eight people met with Pastor Chris to begin discussion regarding opportunities to provide intentional care for members and their needs. This would include visitations with those who are ill, homebound, suffering from loss or in need of various kinds of help or assistance, as well as follow-up with visitors. A second meeting was to be held in February (after this was written). The purpose of these meetings is to establish a team of people who will work with and assist the current and future pastors in visitation, welcoming and caring. If you would like to be a part of, or know more about what is being developed, talk to any of the following: Pastor Chris, Ron Mertens, Kathleen and Gus Gustafson, Barbara and Lew Harrold, Dave Niles, Lisa Quinnan, Dana Sherburne.

### SHIRTS, SHIRTS AND MORE SHIRTS

This past year at least 25 people ordered GCC Polo Shirts and T-Shirts. As a result, we celebrated with Shirt Sunday in October and many people wore their shirts while working at the Snowflake Fair.

This is a great way to show others that you are part of the GCC family. In addition to the short-sleeved Polo and T-shirts, we now have available long-sleeve T-Shirts and Sweat Shirts.

We would like to place an order by the end of March, so if you would like one or more of these shirts, fill out an order sheet and send it with payment to the Church Office. Order forms are available in the middle office.

### BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES

This past year, we have compiled a list of nearly 150 names for Birthdays and Anniversaries. If you want to receive a card for your Birthday and/or Wedding Anniversary, make sure the Church Office has the correct date.

I know many of us receive cards from various organizations looking for contributions. If you have cards that you are not using, we would be pleased to have them for our use. Just put them in the Minister of Hospitality box in the middle office. I thank the Thrift Shop for passing on many cards, as well as others who have done so in the past.

As we approach the end of the first two years of our new program of Team Leadership, please be sure to thank Ron Mertens for all his hard work as your Minister of Hospitality for these past two years. Last March Carol Hurn agreed to jump on board as his mentor and after Annual Meeting on March 3, she will be your new Minister of Hospitality. Are you interested in what this job entails? She's looking for a mentor for the upcoming year who will take over the reins at the end of her term in March of 2020.



## GCC YOUTH MINISTRY

**Sunday School**~ Winter is in full swing! Don't let the urge to hibernate keep you from missing the fun. Our group meets during service Sundays. All school aged children are welcome to attend our classes. Amazing church elves have been busy transforming the nursery into a new "youth" space. The carpeting is just right for guided meditations. The lounge feel is welcoming and invites conversation. The teenagers are happy to have a place to call their own (where no eating or drinking takes place). Please stop by and check it out. Sunday school is an opportunity to unplug from the technical world we live in. It's a safe space to learn about the values of the church and community. Most importantly, it's a place where friendships and memories are made.

### Upcoming Events

March 17<sup>th</sup> at 11:45 am: *A Giving of Yourself Special Friends* program. Youth from 5<sup>th</sup> grade through high school have the opportunity to visit patients in a local nursing home as a group. Once cannot imagine how thankful an older person is to have company.

March 31<sup>st</sup> at 12:30 pm: Bowling ~ Bring a friend!

April 14<sup>th</sup> Palm Sunday Easter Egg Hunt and *The Triumphal Entrance of Jesus into Jerusalem – the beginning of Holy Week*. All ages are welcome-contact BEAM if you are interested. Costumes will be available and there are no speaking parts.

April – packing for West Virginia and a hike.

May – Bike Rodeo, Scavenger Hunt and Youth Auction.

June – Youth Sunday and a visit to Star Island (start saving your money!)

Please contact BEAM if you are interested in any of these events. Let her know of your interest and we will let you know of availability. Watch your email for the dates of the later events.

Don't forget Dinner and Games on the 4<sup>th</sup> Friday of the month!

### Adult Volunteers are needed!

We are in the planning stages of a summer **VBS program** and are looking for adult volunteers interested in helping run this summer's program. We will begin in the next month.

Let BEAM know if you can help!



**Friday March 22, April 26 & May 24 at 6 PM**



As we approach Annual Meeting on March 3, we have a full team of ministers ready to serve the church in the upcoming year with the exception of one-the Minister of Faith Formation. Caroline Cranos has held this position for 2 years now and it's time for a new Minister to come forward and answer the call. Are you motivated to work with the youth of the church? Do you have ideas about Adult Ed program you'd like to see enacted? This may be the job for you! If you are interested in learning more, see Pastor Chris or Caroline.



## OUTREACH MINISTRY

**Team Missions Possible** is bringing back an "oldie but goodie". Long before GCC experimented with replacing the traditional boards and committees with Ministers and Teams we had **Team Bread** which was a group of people willing to prepare meals as needed for people in our church family and wider community. Team Bread was mentioned by more than one person during the visioning process as a ministry that spoke to who we are and who we want to continue to be as a church. As Pastor Chris mentioned in a recent sermon we are called to build circles where we can see each other's needs, sorrows and joys and share them together.

We are looking for people to join Team Bread - please sign up on the Team sign-up in the Middle office.

Team members can participate as they are able - there is never any obligation. Team members will be notified when there is a need for meals and if they are able invited to prepare and or deliver the meals.

On an ongoing basis the Freezer immediately outside of the parlor will be available for people who like to cook to bring down meals and place them in the freezer to be used by anyone who has need of a meal. Single servings to meals that will feed a family of four are welcome. Please label each meal with a description and the date it was placed in freezer.

***Meals in the Team Bread Freezer are available to taken by anyone! If you know of someone who is struggling for any reason and who could use a break from cooking please feel free to share one of the meals from Team Bread!***

### **Behind the Scenes- Emmaus Meal**

Unlike the Wizard of Oz, there are lots of people behind the screen, making all our Missions possible.

For example, here's a photo of Mark Regan-cooking up a great monthly meal for Emmaus house.

*It's really remarkable how much GCC does, and all quietly and behind the scenes.*

Thanks to everyone, named & unnamed for all that you are doing and will do in GCC's future.

**You can do this too! Join in our missions.**

If you're not into cooking food, try Thrift shop, and feed your spirit with its warm clothes and warm staff.

*Better yet, keep an eye out for new mission opportunities coming soon.*

Our hope is to engage ALL members of our church community in mission projects they find meaningful.

**See Kim Mosley and ask to join "Team Missions Possible"**



Hunger doesn't take a vacation, that's why at GCC we collect and deliver food donations all year long.

Interested in donating? There is a collection bin in Fellowship Hall and a second bin in the back of the sanctuary.

Not sure what to donate? What non-perishable food items do you like to eat? If you like it someone else will too!

Where do the donations go? Donations are rotated between the following local charities-Open Hand Pantry in Haverhill, Pettengill House in Salisbury, Groveland Council on Aging and West Newbury Council on Aging.

## HELP WANTED

**There are several areas of the church where folks are looking for help. As you read through, see if any of these match your interest. Most, if not all, have signup sheets on the TEAM bulletin board in the middle office.**

- Do you have some time to help out with the Maddock Scholarship Reviews? May will be here before we know it...so let's get started! Come and jump on Team Scholarship. Minor time commitment...No specific skills necessary...Just an appreciation for our young people and their life endeavors. Contact Sandy Keene to express interest. Know a senior who could use some financial assistance? Contact Jen in the office for an application.
- **Search Team** - the Profile Team has been hard at work putting together a profile of GCC to send out in search of our new settled pastor. They will wrap up their work in the next couple of months and then it will be time for the Search Team to take over the reins. Does this sound like something you are interested in working on? It will require at least a one year commitment of weekly (possibly more) meetings. If you are interested, please see Pastor Chris.
- Panera Bread pick up – as Ron Mertens mentioned in his Hospitality update, they are always in need of folks willing to pick up the Panera bread donation on Tuesday nights. If you think you can spare an hour or so every now and then, see Ron for more details.
- The Youth program is in need of Adult Volunteers to help out with **VBS**, among other things. If you would like to be part of this exciting program, see BEAM or Caroline Cranos.
- Are you feeling called to help lead the church? Our current Ministry Team is almost fully in place, with the exception of a Minister of Faith Formation. Caroline Cranos has served in this capacity for two years and her term is ending. There hasn't been much interest from the congregation in taking on this role and without it, our opportunities for Faith Formation programs dwindle. If you would like more information about the position, please reach out to Caroline or Pastor Chris.
- We are also looking for folks willing to step into the role of "mentee" for each Minister. Serving in this capacity would mean working with the Ministry Team in leading the church. The current Minister would serve as the mentor and then next year take over the role of the Minister and mentor your successor. See any member of the Ministry Team for more information!!

COMMUNITY

*Yoga*

**\$5** CLASS

MONDAYS AT 6:30 PM



**The third Saturday of every month at 9 AM**



## Free Community Lunch

Second Saturday  
of the month  
11:30 am - 1 pm



## Food Coop Opportunity

For about 20 years I have had a small buying group connected with Associated Buyers, distributors of natural, organic, specialty and ethnic foods. They also offer frozen foods. We order 4 times a year: some people order every time, others only once in a while. The order is delivered to our house, and after it is sorted, people come and pick up their items. I thought that there might be others who might be interested: let me know if you would like more information.

<http://www.associated-buyers.com/pdf/AB%2019%20JAN%20Catalog>

Kathleen Tucker Gustafson

978-373-9565

[gustuck12@gmail.com](mailto:gustuck12@gmail.com)

## A THANK YOU from The Profile Team

Profile Writing Team

Fellow Parishioners,

The Profile Team wishes to thank you for your responses to the Survey.

We received a total of 33 responses, of which were on 18 paper and 15 via the web survey. It was clear that all of you cared deeply for the church, each in your own way.

We reflected on those responses, as we worked to create what we feel reflects a composite view of the Church that is balanced and representative of where GCC is now.

We pray that it will assist all of us to begin to create the future GCC.

Toward that end, the Profile will be presented at the Annual Meeting March 3<sup>rd</sup>.

Once again, we thank you all for your participation, and ask for your continued support as we move forward.

Yours In Christ

The Profile Team: Nancy Fitzgerald, Phyllis Forsyth, Lew Harrold, Carol Mansell, Joan Parah



Created by Kara Keene



Skipping church  
to play Fortnite



Going to church  
and basking in  
the Holy Spirit

## Easter Word Search



Angel	Holy	Messiah	Savior
Cross	Hope	Resurrection	Third Day
Crown of Thorns	Jesus	Risen	
Easter	King	Sacrifice	
Empty Tomb	Love	Salvation	
Good Friday	Mary	Sunday	



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## MANY VOICES ONE MISSION: LIMINAL SPACE – THE ROAD IS MADE BY WALKING

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It was Mark Twain who observed that the only person who likes change is a baby with a wet diaper.

Well, that baby, and our God. Our God, who is constant, whose steadfast love endures forever, who is the same yesterday, today and forever; our God likes change. Not change for the sake of change; but change that leads us out of the delusions of the stability and security for which we so strive. Our most sacred stories speak of a God who moves us from Egypt's slavery into the wilderness; talks with us in times of exile, drives God's very self into a deserted place and walks through death to resurrection.

God may like change, we are not so fond of it. In a world that is increasingly volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous, we long for some place of refuge, safety, security and stability.

As the crow flies, a person could take a fast jet from Egypt to the promised land in about 40 minutes. 200 years ago people caravanned in covered wagons across this country over mountains, plains and rivers in as little as 4 months. The Israelites, in our scripture, crossed that same distance in 40 years. Because the destination was not the goal, at least it wasn't for God. The road was made by walking and that road was the place of inner transformation; where they learned to deepen their bonds of relationship and trust in a God they were coming to know. They were seeking to understand who they were and what their purpose was as a people of God. They came to perceive the world through new perspectives. Security, stability, refuge and safety can get in the way of that. The road takes the time it takes.

One of the fundamental lessons of that road is liminal space. It is learning how to become comfortable with having more questions than answers. It is the place where we discover how to pay attention; to notice what is happening around us and within us and wonder where God is moving. It is learning how to sit in the uncomfortableness of uncertainty and to seek and to trust God. It is the place where we name our fears and griefs and hurt and surrender them to God. It is the space where we listen to other voices and perspectives that are outside of our experience and the world/culture in which we live (voices that belong to people who have long been familiar with the uncertainty that comes from living in the margins). It is the place where we tremble while listening to the voice of the Spirit invite us to "Be still and know that I am God." It is where we release and shed, learn to leave behind, all that will not enable us to be faithful and healthy and effective in the new land where we are already living.

The word "liminal" has its origin in the Latin root, limen, which means "threshold." It is the place between what you are leaving behind and what you're discovering. It's a transition space. Liminal space is the crucial element of the journey into Holy Indifference to Outcome (letting go and letting God, 'thy Will be done') that will lead us through the uncharted territory of the world in which we live.



And God will always be there in that space...of change, of transformation, of new life.

*Rev. Don Remick is the Transitional Interim Conference Minister for the MA Conference, UCC.*



**Proverbs 29:18 (KJV) Where there is no vision, the people perish: but he that keepeth the law, happy is he.**

During a Special Meeting in June 2018, Groveland Congregational Church voted to undertake creating a “vision” for GCC. The purpose of this effort was to create a shared Vision that would enhance the recruitment of a stellar settled pastor and help target the church’s Ministries. The effort was to be facilitated by Lew Harrold (a certified management consultant).

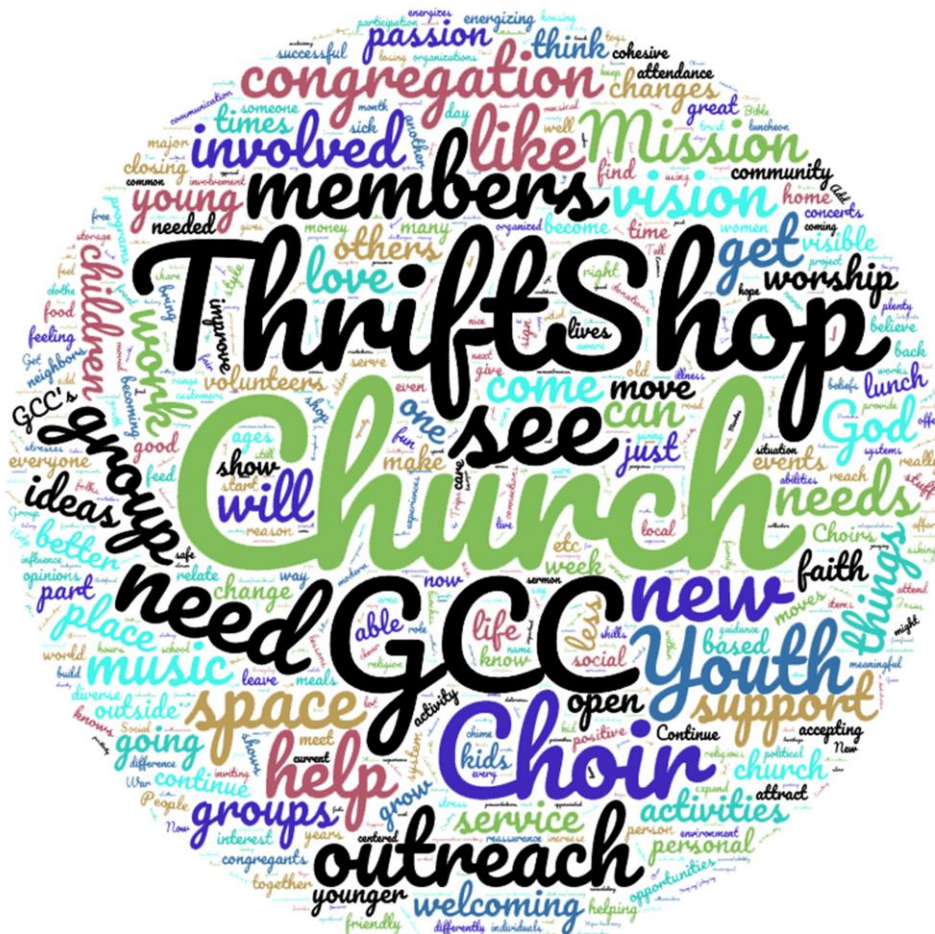
After meeting with the Ministers, the work kicked off in Fall 2018. The congregation's input was collected primarily through a series of small group meetings conducted in September, October and January 2019. In addition, a wall display was created and used as a means of beginning to coalesce the responses collected during the small group meetings.

The congregation provided 372 unique and personal visions of GCC. Capturing and capitalizing on the group's mood, and the inspiration these responses triggered, is a daunting task. Major Themes "Voiced" at the Sessions used words like: Youth, Younger, Children, Community, Families, People, Congregation, Outside, Community Surrounding, Neighbors, Groveland, Together, Mission, Choir, Thrift Shop, Going, Worship, Opportunities, Volunteers.

One simple and visually compelling way to begin that task was to produce a word-cloud to help visualize responses. Word clouds categorize and display words using colors and text size (how often words appear). A word-cloud containing all the words used in the 372 responses is reproduced below.

Technical Word cloud Note:

- Word Size is set by how many times the word appears in the responses, relative to the other words.
- Words are sprinkled into the space by the app.
- Words with the same color appear the same number of times.



More on the next page...

Additionally, an art display called “the Runner” was created and used as a tool to allow the congregation to select which visioning responses most closely represented their views.



The 50 responses which were “strung” and attached to the Runner are listed below in Table 1 below.

1. [Thrift Shop] being recognized as a committee and core group of the Church
2. A safe place for all to be part of.
3. Attract younger families to grow Church & Youth Choirs
4. Be part of a Church that stays positive and builds up people/ideas- A Church that says YES
5. Continue to be a visible "structure" in this Community which shows God's presence in the life of GCC's membership: welcoming to all, stewardship to God, fellowship and Mission outreach
6. Create a sense of belonging for each person who enters our doors and a safe place.
7. Current Faith Circle situation: Faith Circle members are getting older & dying at an alarming rate. Younger members of Church not going to take over. Very worried!
8. Diversity music-maybe bring in people to teach us their music style
9. Eliminating theft from the front [Thrift Shop]
10. Engaging more people to help out
11. Find out what the needs of families are and how can GCC meet those needs.
12. Following Jesus in mission to the poor, disenfranchised: mission ground in deep spirituality-guidance of the Holy Spirit
13. Giving us things to do and opportunities we might not have otherwise
14. Going down the "traditional" road
15. Handicap accessible
16. Handicap Accessible; access for all
17. Having the Church really buy into the ONA and actively support LGBTQA Community
18. I think a cause like the one BEAM has for War would motivate people to do at least something.

19. Inclusive of all not just through word but through action
20. Invite the LGBTQ Community; broaden the outreach to other Communities
21. Learn to trust each other
22. LGBT Events: Marches, Services, Celebrations, remembrances
23. Meeting new friends
24. Minister to those in need
25. More communication
26. More communication about illness deaths, other concerns than now.
27. More people involved interactive in life of Church
28. Multi-Racial; mixed group of sexual preference.
29. My passion is parents will start involving their children in Church
30. My vision for GCC is to have our congregation as a cohesive group interacting together throughout the week.
31. my vision-more members who are diverse and with a range of ages
32. Need financial accountability and Mission decision clarity [where's the money going and who decides Missional priorities in the current system?]
33. Need to have the pulse of the Community
34. New beginnings
35. No Idea
36. Seeing trust improve
37. Social Justice
38. Something at night (Adult Ed, book review, etc) for people who work full time
39. The old style of Churchie stuff [needs to change]
40. To be the Groveland Community's Church and surrounding communities too.
41. To be welcoming and accepting to all by advertising this in person to our Community; we have to advertise our selves
42. To express openness to LGBTQ Community; find out the needs of those in our Community and help them
43. To hopefully attract new families/young people; both types of services
44. Vocal advocate for social justice-Be out there and do it
45. We will find successful methods for drawing in people who were never associated with a Church before
46. What would move me would be to help support families struggling with mental illness and behavioral issues and addiction with experiences from our own pasts knowing we are not a social service agency
47. where it's going. I believe the church is going to combine the old ideas with new ideas successfully (with a lot of work)
48. Children & Youth activities: Bible Education, Outreach
49. Include the youth more
50. Questioning role of organized religion in our lives

More details about the art installation (called "The Runner") and the complete report can be found on our member website [www.members.grovelanducc.org](http://www.members.grovelanducc.org).

**In conclusion, it is recommended that the congregation acts on this energy and creates a Team which will take these responses, coalesce them, and work with the Congregation to create a shared set of Vision Statements which are actionable and shared by the congregation.**

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