

FIRST
CONGREGATIONAL
CHURCH

Herald of Good TIDINGS

“Get you up to a high mountain, O Zion, herald of good tidings; lift up your voice with strength, O Jerusalem, herald of good tidings, lift it up, fear not; say to the cities of Judah, ‘Behold your God!’”

February

2006

Next Church Supper
is
February 18 at 5PM.
This supper may be
cancelled
so check your
bulletins and Auburn
News listings.

"Obstacles are those
frightful things you see
when you take your eyes
off your goal."
- Henry Ford

Coffee Hour Hosts

2/5 ~ Board of Christian Education

2/12 & 2/19 ~ Library Committee

2/26 & 3/5 ~ Stewardship

3/12 & 3/19 ~ Outreach

3/26 ~ Music

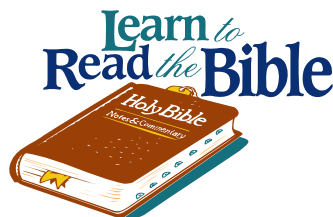
On Sunday January 22 we installed our new officers and committees who will serve the church in 2006 and we recognized and celebrated the 230th anniversary of the organization of the church on January 25, 1776.

Two hundred and thirty years is not a long time when compared to some of our sister churches in Massachusetts which may be up to 140 years older but it is a significant amount of time to be in ministry in Auburn. It has not been an easy history, and many of our former members had to struggle to maintain the church and its ministry. We are again in a struggle to maintain our presence and ministry. Our culture seeks to diminish our commitment and relevance by offering many alternatives to active participation in the life of the church. Persons are encouraged to prefer individual independence of action over institutional response to our common needs so we neglect our institutions.

But anniversaries are for celebrating the successes of our history and the tenacity of our faith and the generosity of our response to the needs of our community. This church has been a significant presence in Ward and Auburn for 230 years and it is our vision, our prayer to serve here for at least 230 more years. May God bless our history and our future.

God Bless,
Rev. Dr. Kenneth E Knox
Pastor

Spring Bible Study



The Pastor will offer two Bible Studies this Spring. The first will be Bible 101, getting acquainted and comfortable with The Bible. Basic information to help people use their Bibles will be offered pre-Lent on Wednesdays February 1 and February 15 from 7-8:30PM.

The second will be a four week Lenten Bible Study on a New Testament topic chosen at the Bible 101 study, offered on Thursdays, March 9, 16, 23 and 30th from 7-8:30 PM.

Youth on a Mission

Youth on a Mission is excited about 2006!! Our annual auction has been changed to a SATURDAY NIGHT March 25th. The evening will begin with a preview of auction items and a baked ziti & meatball dinner at 5:00pm. The **LIVE** bidding, with our returning auctioneer Tate Conkey, begins at 6:00 sharp. This auction is a lot of fun and our biggest fundraiser for our summer mission trip.

Please mark your calendars and plan to attend. Once again we will be combining our efforts with the senior youth group of Sutton

First Congregational church. This worked out really well for us last year and brought in a wider variety of auction items and bidders.



We will also be taking orders for Easter candy at the end of March to be delivered on Palm Sunday April 9th. We'll be offering our traditional favorites of coconut eggs, peanut butter eggs & nut clusters as well as some new items.

Unfortunately, we will not be able to go to New Orleans for our summer mission trip. It has been determined that the extra travel time and finances would be difficult, if not impossible, to overcome. We are still looking at locations in NC, KY and TN. We'll let you know as soon as we've made the final decision.

We've also been invited to participate in a couple of activities with the Sutton First Congregational youth. Anyone in NINTH GRADE and up is invited to "stay up all night with Jesus". This event will take place at the Sutton Church on Maundy Thursday April 13th. I will put out details as they become available to me. Anyone in SIXTH GRADE and up is welcome to participate in this year's 24 hour famine. This is an overnight event from Friday night April 28th to Saturday evening April 29th at the Sutton Church. This is a GREAT event that focuses on fun activities that help us learn about and appreciate world hunger. Anyone who attended last year can tell you what a good time it was. If you're interested or have questions please see me for details.

We'll also be bowling and attending a play in the month of February. Remember anyone ninth grade and up is welcome in Youth on a Mission. Our next meeting will be February 13th in the junior high room after church and February 26th. Please join us.

Jennifer Bohn

Music Committee

The Music Committee had it's first meeting on January 16th after the All Committee Meeting. Chair person—Jo-Ann DeRosa, Co-Chair—Ruby Premo, Secretary—Carol Jones and Council Rep—Debbie Mahlert. Our Meetings will be held once a month after church on Sundays around 11 A.M.

Respectfully Yours,

Linda G Mahlert



BOARD of DEACONS

Deacons

The board of deacons was sad to say goodbye to some familiar faces Ron & Connie Hanks, Phyllis Hardy and Harry Wojciak. Our church is grateful for your past service. We happily welcome our new board members Bob & Dottie Koopman. Unfortunately we are still two deacons short of a full board. If anyone would like to volunteer to fill either of the two empty spaces, please let the nominating committee know.

Our first official duty will be to meet with this year's confirmation class on March 28th to hear their statements of faith and recommend them for membership in the church. April will be busy with Palm Sunday (April 9th) Maundy Thursday Service (April 13th) and three services on Easter Sunday (April 16th).

We look forward to a wonderful and busy year serving our church community. We will be paying particular attention to trying to grow our church and reach former members. Please feel free to contact any member to the deacons with any ideas or suggestions you may have in that regard.

Your 2006 Board of Deacons,

Randy & Jennifer Bohn
 Ron Klaucke
 Paul & Louise Powers
 Bob & Dottie Koopman
 Kevin & Ailaine Zautner
 Pat Bukowski



Outreach committee

Hello, everyone, and happy 2006! We're excited to be starting a new year as the Outreach Committee. We look forward to connecting with and helping our community, both inside and outside of First Congregational. Several on the Outreach team are involved with additional church activities, so we hope to have good communication with all of our fellow church members. We welcome any suggestions for ways to reach out to the community, financially or otherwise. Just contact any of us or leave a note in the Outreach mailbox. We look forward to working with everyone. Our committee this year is: Sue Campbell (Secretary), Alicia Schillinger, Ernie Smith (Council Rep), Harry Wojciak, and Ellie Lowell (Chair).

Thanks, the Outreach Committee

Tidings for January

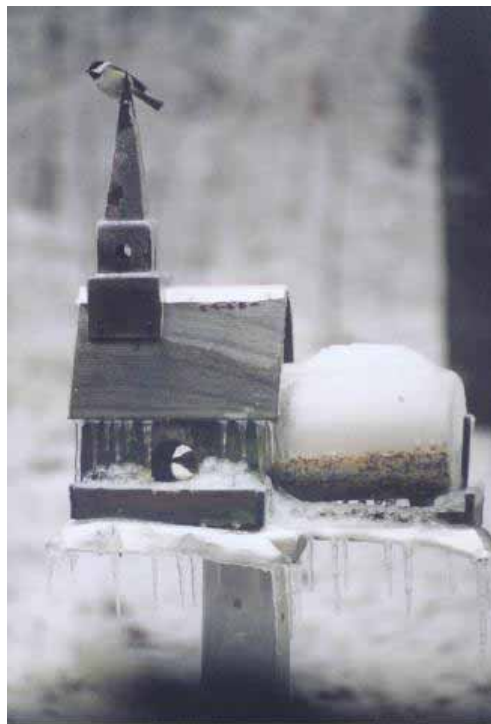
It is hard to believe that another year has come and gone! It has been a busy year! As I was thinking about what to write this month, I came across a poem by Alice Joyce Davidson that summed up my thoughts rather nicely. Please allow me to share it with you.

Thank you, Father, thank you,
For this year fresh and new,
Another chance to know Your love-
To show my love for You...

Another chance to make amends
For yesteryear's mistakes,
To ask forgiveness and forgive
Those little hurts and aches...

Thank you for this day that brings
New dreams, new plans, new hopes,
Along with all the strength I need
To climb the steepest slopes...

Thank you, Father, thank you,
For this year fresh and new,
A chance to grow, a chance to show
My boundless love for you!



I hope this new year provides you with lots of opportunities to dream, plan and hope. I pray that you will have grace to forgive and be forgiven, and strength to handle all that God sends your way this year. May this year be a blessed one for you and your family!

-Barbara Jernigan

NOTE: This Tidings article was submitted in time for January's publication but I did not get it into the January Tidings by my own error. Tammy (humble church secretary)



Wednesday Feb. 8 - Here We Grow! Open House
from 12-2 PM. Snow date: February 15, 12-2.

Time to Update the Directory - Please call the church with any name, address, and/or phone numbers that are not correctly listed in the directory. If you have had a change, please do not assume that the church has it in the system. Please contact the office at 508-832-2845.





February is Heart Month. February 3rd is National Wear Red Day. February 14 is National Donor Day. February 11-18 is Cardiac Rehabilitation Week.

It is also National Children's Dental Health Month, Kids E.N.T. (Ears, Nose, and Throat) Health Month. February 3 is Give Kids a Smile Day.

2006 HEALTHY HEART EVENT

At Walmarts on Saturday, February 18th, 11a.m.-5p.m.

The Healthy Heart event stresses the importance of education, assessment, and action in the fight against cardiovascular disease. By focusing on your individual journey, the event allows you to personalize the program to fit your lifestyle. Just follow 3 complimentary steps:

1. **Learn:** use the Resource book and the Risk Test you'll find at the event to educate your self on the most up-to-date information on heart health.
2. **Evaluate:** Have your blood pressure and cholesterol checked at the Health Screening Station 11a.m.-3p.m.
3. **Live:** Try Heart-Healthy products at the sampling stations located throughout the store.

This event is also going on at Sam's Club.

February 13-19 is National Child Passenger Safety Week. I recently read that 8 out of 10 children aren't in safety seats in the cars. If you know of someone that is using a car seat, whether it be an infant seat, or a booster, please make sure that it is in the car correctly! I've been trained to demonstrate and all police officers can help as well. When you buckle the seat in the car, before you put the child in it, you put your knee on the seat and apply pressure. Then you tighten the belt before releasing the weight of your knee. Otherwise the seat won't be secure if there is an accident.

Be healthy and safe!

Debbie Pranaitis

Parish Nurse

Thursday Feb. 16 - Baptism Workshop

7 PM - If you are considering having your child baptized, please call the office and sign up for one of our (1) hour workshops held every other month.

Saturday April 15 - Scholarship Applications Due

- Applications are now available in Fellowship Hall and in the church office for anyone interested in applying for a scholarship.



"Some have suggested there's a lack of diversity in the church leadership."

Tidings for February 2006

February is the month when we think about love, the people we love and the people who love us. Love is a funny thing, and many people approach it in different ways. Many people define love in very different ways, too. What follows are some thoughts on love that might help us all to truly love others.

- ∅ Loving a person is one thing; communicating that love is quite another.
- ∅ Loving involves trust; I will neither believe nor listen to ill spoken about a person I love until I have irrefutable proof.
- ∅ Loving involves another person; that person must be allowed to express his/her uniqueness with integrity rather than reflect my perspectives, preferences, and prejudices.
- ∅ Loving requires sharing; I will share as much of the best that I have and that I am with the person I love, rather than see how little I must give up.
- ∅ Loving produces a special relationship; I want to express my hurts and frustrations to the one I love, but I also want to share my joys and successes.
- ∅ Loving another person enriches me; I want to be the best person I can be because the other I love deserves no less.

Loving other persons is a wonderful thing, but we were created to love God. We were created in his image to worship and love him at all times, not just on Sunday morning, but everyday, all day and night. Our relationship with God needs to be as good, if not better than our relationship with the people that we love. Our God deserves no less. 1John 4:7-21 talks about the love God has for us, and the love we need to have for him and for others. God bless us during this season of love with an ever deepening love for him and for each other.

In His love,
Barb Jernigan

Reminders:

- * There will be a Sunday School teachers meeting on February 5th at 11:00 a.m.
- * There will be a meeting for the youth in grades 6-8 on February 12th at 11:00 a.m.
- * The children will be in church for the first part of the service on Sunday, February 26th, there will be a children's message and Joyful Noyse will sing.

Recently Spotted Bumper Stickers:

The Lord giveth...the IRS taketh away.

If at first you don't succeed, skydiving isn't for you.

Do Not Meddle in the Affairs of Dragons...For You are Crunchy and Taste Good With Ketchup.

Forget world peace--visualize using your turn signal!



Stewardship...A Way of Life

As the February Stewardship says "Everything comes from God. We may use our talent or ability to achieve material goods, but the talent or ability is a gift from God to begin with. It means cultivating an attitude of generous giving and getting into the habit of thinking of others."

Your generosity in the Pledge Drive of 2005 has allowed us to begin 2006, fiscally, in a better position than we have been in the past. And for that, we all thank you.

Consider our choir for a moment. Our choir has grown in such numbers as we haven't seen in a very long time and this is pleasing to all of us. Just this past Sunday I remarked to the person next to me how wonderful the music sounded...so pleasing to the ear and to God. I couldn't help but smile. Their wonderful voices and music talents being shared with all of us...from God....for the benefit of God.

How about you...do you have some special talent which you can share with our Church in this upcoming year? As we heard Reverend Knox say on Sunday during the installation of the Lay members of the Church to their various committees, for as many people as were up in front of the sanctuary, there are still vacant positions. Consider thinking of others and the Church during the upcoming year....and helping out in ways that even you didn't dream possible. The opportunities in your Church are endless.

Our Committee hopes that each of you finds *Stewardship* a valuable addition to the monthly Tidings mailing. We welcome any comments and/or thoughts you might have regarding this publication or about Stewardship in general. Please feel free to speak with any one of us or send your comments via email to Stewardship@AuburnFirstUCC.org. We look forward to hearing from you.

In His Love,
The Stewardship Committee
 John Rockwood (Chair), Michael & Michele Schillinger, Al Boucher, Todd & Donna Dube,
 Kenneth Holstrom



From the Nominating Committee

There are still a few slots to be filled - Outreach, Deacons, Education and Historian. Please consider 'giving of your time and talent to one of these committees. Contact Carole Murray @ 508-832-3179 or Marion Woodcock at 508-832-2160.

Thanks
 Carole and Marion

The Tidings

We are planning to publish birthdays and wedding anniversaries in the Tidings. We will not publish this information without signed permission. If you would like to submit birthdays or anniversaries please fill out and sign a submittal form in Fellowship Hall, we will get them posted for the related months. Thank You.



The Board of Trustees

Thank you to Bob Johnson, Bruce Fant, and Cindy Ryan for their service over the past three years. They will be replaced by new members Kelly Fant, Paul Gemme, and Dave Sampson. We would also like to welcome our new Church Sexton, Craig Premo. As of this writing Craig has only been on the job for 2 weeks, but has already been making a noticeable impact on the care and upkeep of the church. Welcome aboard Craig!

When preparing the budget this year, it became apparent that we will be faced again with a deficit. Building expenses have risen dramatically this past year by over 26%. We are asking our members to continue to support the Trustees in our efforts to deal with this deficit. Support can come in many forms: donations through special offering envelopes, attending fund raisers that will be held throughout the year, attending or working at the monthly church suppers. We can also help the deficit by conserving energy use within the church. After meetings or functions, please be sure to turn thermostats down to low and make sure lights are turned off. Thanks to a generous \$5,000 donation from Here We Grow preschool, the balance on the new roof loan is down to \$7,000. Through additional fund raisers and donations, we believe our goal of paying off the roof loan by the end of this year is within sight. Feel free to drop the Trustees a line at Trustees@AuburnFirstUCC.org

Wednesday Feb. 1- Feb. 28 - Here We Grow! Preschool will be doing their Yankee Candle Fundraiser. If you would like to place an order, you may do so with the church secretary during office hours.

February 14th is Valentine's Day



Monday February 20 ~
President's Day- Church office will be closed.



Joyful Noyse Choir Member of the Month:

~Victoria Stockhaus~

Victoria is 9 years old and is in the 3rd grade at Elmwood St School. She has been singing in Joyful Noyse for 4 years. Victoria also takes voice lessons and sings in the chorus at her school.

Recently she was chosen to perform at the Millbury Tree Lighting singing "I'll Be Home For Christmas" as part of a trio. Tori has also sung several solos with Joyful Noyse as well as duets with mom, Lori. As mom sings in the adult choir, and sister Cassie also sings with Joyful Noyse, singing is definitely a family affair in the Stockhaus home! Tori has this to say about singing:

(I most enjoy) "singing alone because you feel very good"
and
(music makes me feel) "very good because you feel appreciated."

Joyful Noyse Schedule

Feb.	
5,12,19	11 AM
26	9:15 AM
'Lord I Lift Your Name on High'	
March	
5, 12,19	11 AM
26	9:15 AM
'I Have Come Down to the Lakeshore'	
'Ask and Seek and Knock'	

"Make a joyful Noise
unto the Lord"
~Psalm 101

HERE WE GROW PRESCHOOL

Happy Valentines' Day to all. Don't you just wish winter or at least the cold cold days were over? I do. It has hard to believe it is already time to write the February Tidings article. The month of January is just a blur, but I do remember a few things that happened. We finally received the long awaited letter from NAEYC. Here We Grow Preschool is now an accredited program. The staff and families are very excited and proud. After three years of changes and consultations with other educations, the dream is complete. The certificate is in the office window waiting to be framed. The accreditation will last for five years.

Parent/teacher conferences were held on January 19th and January 25th. It is nice to be able to sit down with the parents and have a full 15 minutes to talk about the progress of their children. Everyone seemed pleased with all progress reports.

It is with pride that I mention the Here We Grow Board of Directors voted to donate \$5,000.00 to the roof fund. We hope this will help bring the balance to an amount that will be gone soon. Good Luck.

During the month of February Here We Grow will be hosting an Open House for all perspective families for the '06-'07 school year. At this time all four year A.M. spots are full with a wait list. The afternoon four year olds have a few spots left. The two day programs which are for three year olds are filling very fast, so if you know of anyone with a three or four year old looking for a great accredited program, have them call the school at 508-832-8184.

The children will be having Valentine Day parties in their classrooms on Monday, Feb. 13th and on Tuesday, Feb. 14th. They will have special snacks provided by their parents and will all be dressed as mailpersons so they can share cards with their classmates.

Rounding out the month of February, Here We Grow will be selling Yankee Candles for its final fundraiser for the year. If there is anything you would like, stop in the HWG office or the church office to look through a catalog.

School will not be in session the week of February 20th- 24th. We will be enjoying our winter break. Hopefully the weather will be accommodating to everyone.

Until next month, stay healthy and warm.

Dawn Murphy
Director, Here We Grow Preschool





Our sympathies to Cliff Peterson and his family on the passing of his wife, Millie Peterson on January 8th. Her funeral was Thursday, January 12. Millie was a church member who joined the church back in October, 2004. Please keep the family and friends in your prayers.

Charlotte Harrington passed away on January 7, 2006. She lost her husband on December 2, 2005. Our sympathies to their family and friends.

Our sympathies to Carol Luther and her family on the loss of her brother David Howland on January 9, 2006.

Our sympathies to the family and friend of Rita A. Provost who died January 12, 2006.. She was Donna Errede's mother.

Our sympathies to the family and friends of Helen Eloise Shapter who passed away on January 22, 2006.

Library Tidings for February '06

Martin Luther King Day was a celebration of the past when I started to write for the February Tidings. Actually, the day before, I'd sounded like a barking 'Gravel Gertie' and, having skipped church, was lamenting the fact that none of our books relating to Martin Luther King were featured to be borrowed. My mind then darted to how race has become a core issue following the devastation caused by hurricane Katrina.

Next, it was to Hank Stolz who devoted his morning segment on W.T.A.G. to race relations. One caller alluded to the fact that those who are mal-actors, though a small group, can cast a pall on the whole. Another addressed the attitude and environment within a home and its tremendous influence.

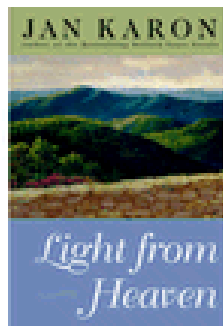
The finale to this sequence of thoughts came from an article my college roommate had sent. The title is *In 2005, White Flight Moves In the Wrong Direction*. The gist—when blacks were newly liberated from legal segregation they began fanning out into neighborhoods from which they'd been restricted. Some whites were traumatized by this thought and put their houses up for sale.

In various sections of this country Asian students are vigorously responding to math and science while significant numbers of other students are being stunted in academic growth by the fruits of our "dumbing down" education in the name of "self esteem". Of course there is more to this issue like parents putting their children in schools which are less Asian, less demanding or private.

Drop back to Martin Luther King Day. Just a thought that can be duplicated in many ways. Picture how the significance of that day off from school might carry more importance for a youngster if, with a parent or someone, they read together a story about Martin Luther King and his mission. Yes, that's assuming that some recognition took place in school.

It's Black History Month. If you've never done so before, do look at or borrow for a week African-American Wisdom. It's assembly of incredible illustrations, proverbs and quotations make it one of the more treasured additions to the library in very recent years.

-Gloria Whitehead



P.S. Several people have asked if we have Jan Karon's last book in the Mitford series, *Light From Heaven*. We were so excited to have it in *early* that it was announced in the bulletin on November 20, 2005.

From the Choir Room

Anthems of the month: 'Thank You Lord' to be sung February 12th, 'God is There' to be sung February 19th and 'Lord I lift Your Name on High' to be sung February 29th.

'Thank You Lord' is an African American Spiritual arranged by John Carter for SATB Choir. It is meant to be sung in a strong gospel style and features a Jazz style piano accompaniment.

'God is There' is written by Jay Althouse, a composer whose anthems we sing quite often. He is one my favorite choral composers as his melodies are sing-able and flowing, making a choir of any size sound their best. 'God is There' is a perfect example of his composition; it's a beautiful, simple yet moving work. He writes this in the forward, "This anthem is characterized by a poignant text which reflects the omnipresence of God. Through good times and bad, through periods of doubt and fear, we know that God is there, and when we need a friend and companion we can always go to God in prayer. A meaningful text for both singers and congregation."

'Lord, I Lift Your Name on High' is a popular contemporary Christian anthem. Joyful Noyse will be performing featuring Eric Pranaitis on snare drum.

I'd like to give an official WELCOME! to new members:

- Mary Brodeur-alto
- William Brodeur-tenor
- Ron Hanks-bass
- Darshan Mahlert-alto
- Debbie Mahlert-alto
- Gordon Mahlert-tenor
- Linda Mahlert-soprano

And a big THANK YOU! to our loyal crew:

- Barbara Allaire-soprano
- Jo-Ann Derosa-alto
- Sue Klaucke-soprano
- Carol Luther-alto
- Alicia Schillinger-soprano
- Lori Stockhaus-soprano
- Pam Tentor-soprano
- Marge Zimmerman-alto

And a special thank you to Avis Britton, recently retired from the choir after 30 years of faithful commitment!

Blessings,

Heather Moore
Minister of Music

Tidings - 2006
Subscription Renewal Form

In an effort to offset the costs of publishing the monthly Tidings, we are asking for members and friends to support a voluntary subscription. Your participation in this is entirely optional and will not affect whether or not you receive the Tidings.

Annual Renewal - \$10
(10 issues, no July or August issue)

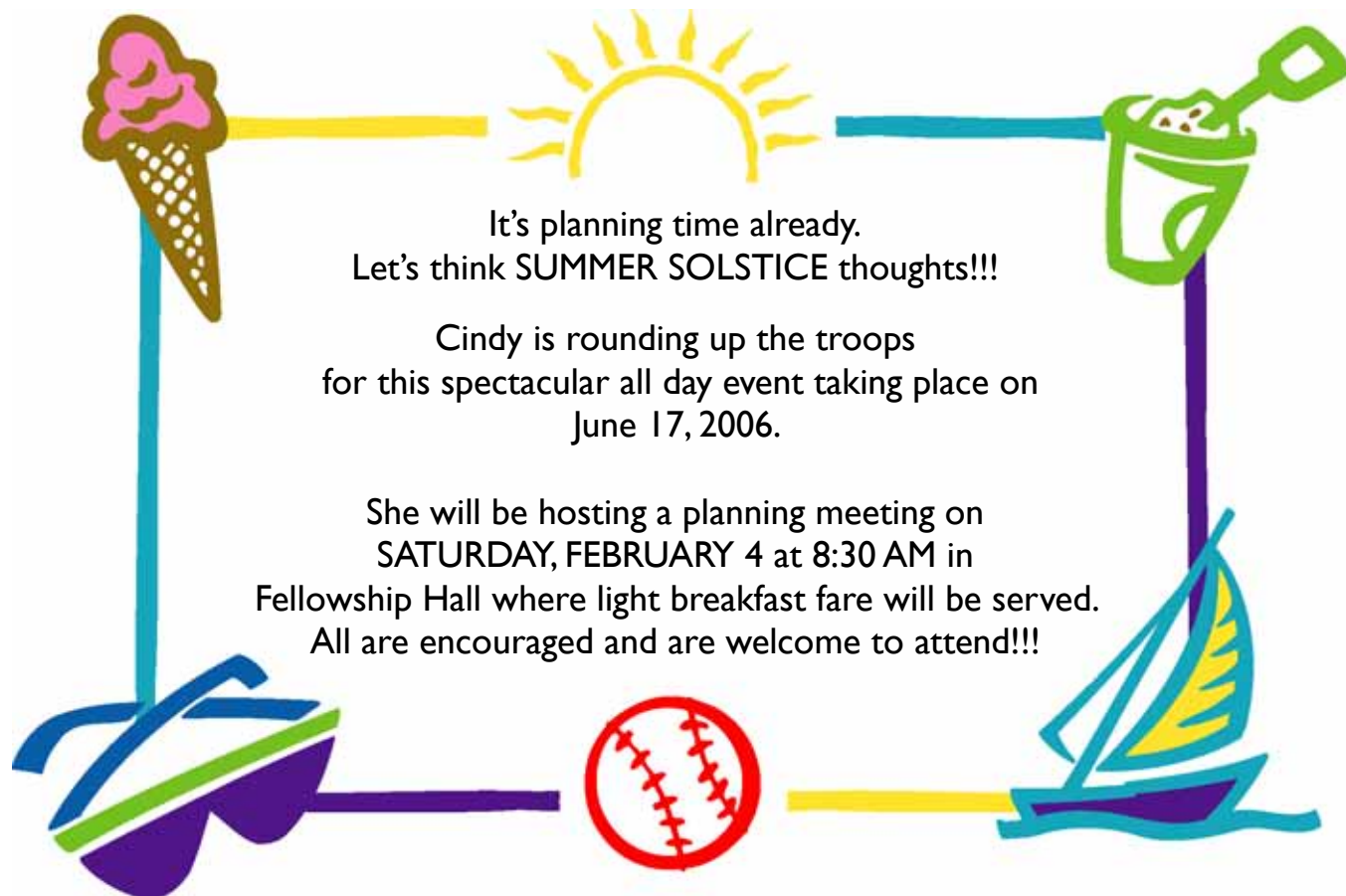
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It's planning time already.
Let's think SUMMER SOLSTICE thoughts!!!

Cindy is rounding up the troops
for this spectacular all day event taking place on
June 17, 2006.

She will be hosting a planning meeting on
SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 4 at 8:30 AM in
Fellowship Hall where light breakfast fare will be served.
All are encouraged and are welcome to attend!!!

*TIDINGS is a monthly
publication of*

**First Congregational
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