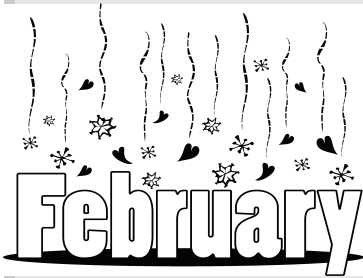


# Herald of Good TIDINGS



FEBRUARY

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*"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!'"*

### From the Pastor

We have concluded our activities and business for 2004 and we're quickly moving into the activities of 2005. Lent and Easter are very early this year. Ash Wednesday on February 9th and Easter on March 27th. Confirmation class is entering into its concluding flurry of activity.

Plans are being made for every Sunday of activities and they are coordinated between our Music, Deacons, Education and Pastoral programs. We will be experimenting with a February Vacation Bible School this year.

We encourage you to become involved in some or several of the activities you will read of in this issue of the Tidings and in future. Church becomes more personal and meaningful as you get involved, and make new friends and co-workers. We know how busy all of our lives get but our involvement in the church is part of the message we are trying to share with the children of our church. We are a busy church but there is so much more that we could and should do if we had the resources and volunteers. Join us in the "cost and joy of discipleship" this spring.

God Bless.

Rev. Dr. Kenneth E. Knox  
Pastor

**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.

## Here We Grow!

Happy Winter, Happy Valentine's Day! With that being said, one can only hope that we are more than half way through the cold weather of winter. During the month of February, the children & staff will be busy preparing for Valentine's parties which will be celebrated on Feb. 10th and Feb. 14th.

Once again it is time for *Here We Grow!* Preschool's Open House. On February 15th from 12-2pm, our doors will be open to eager young children and their parents all coming to "check things out".

With that being said, I would like to share with you some recent comments that a current parent of a *Here We Grow!* student made about your church's program. This is from a parent who volunteered some time in the classroom and whom has sent all three of her boys the *Here We Grow!* program:

***"Although I already know how dedicated you and all of the leaders are, being in the classroom and seeing first hand how warm, caring and patient they all are with the children was wonderful! Thank you all for creating such a wonderful environment for my child to learn and grow! You are all incredible teachers and truly the heart and soul of Here We Grow!"***

I'd like to share one more with you, this from a first time parent of a 4 yr old at *Here We Grow!*:

*Dear Mrs. Murphy,*

*We wanted to take a moment during this busy holiday season to thank you and the entire staff at Here We Grow! for your efforts this year. Our child has had a terrific experience and despite her anxiety about going to school, she absolutely loves being there.*

*Our child speaks often of, and with great affection for you, Mrs. Coyne, Mrs. Lazarz, and all of the other teachers. This is one of the greatest gifts we could have asked for this year. To know our child is in such a nurturing environment - one where she is accepted and appreciated for simply being her unique self is wonderful.*

*We have been so impressed with the dedication of your staff. Not only do we respect them for their professional talents, but also the depth of their kindness. In the many daily moments that perhaps go unrecognized, it is evident how much each one of them cares for each and every child in the program. At the Tougas Farm, the teachers knew all of the children by name, even having been in school for such a short time. And the staff worked together attending to the needs of all the children whether or not they were their own students.*

*The consistency of their commitment to children is unparalleled, even giving up their own personal time on Saturdays. I think our child was as excited to show Mrs. Either, Mrs. Mitchell and her other teachers her finished gingerbread house as she was to eat it. When a child places teachers and candy on the same level, you know that they must be special - and just as sweet! We wanted you to know how grateful we are and wish all of you the best holidays and a happy New Year.*

That says it all! After reading this, my wish is that the First Congregational Church members will be as proud of *Here We Grow!* as the staff is!

Until Next Month

Dawn Murphy

Director

*Here We Grow!* Preschool

## Greetings from the Church Council!

To start with I would like to welcome the new members of the Church council and welcome back the returning members.

2005 promises to be an interesting year for us, and also a busy one.

At the annual meeting, the church voted that the council appoint a "member at large" to represent the church on the newly formed *Here We Grow!* Board. Quite a few people have shown interest in this position already, and hopefully that list will grow. In order to be fair and in an effort to get the most qualified person, we have decided to ask anyone interested to submit their name in writing along with a few sentences explaining why they think that they would be suited for this position. We are also asking that the names be submitted to myself or Tammy, our church secretary, by Feb 27th. You may email them to: [secretary@auburnfirstucc.org](mailto:secretary@auburnfirstucc.org) or to [Steve-Shirley@verizon.net](mailto:Steve-Shirley@verizon.net).

We are also pleased to report that Mike and Cindy Dube have offered to chair a committee to raise the funds needed to repair the roof. Anyone interested in that should contact Mike or Cindy.

In closing, I would like to say that I look forward to the new year with optimism, and a hope that this year will be looked back on as a very productive year in the history of our church.

Respectfully Submitted,

Steve Hill

Mary Anne from *Seafarer's Friend* called the church to express their gratitude for the monetary gifts and the donations that Katie Jernigan brought them in Jan. (see list on page 7).

This on top of the letter we received from Auburn Youth and Family Services, Inc. which stated: *"Last year, we distributed food and gifts to over 85 families. There was a much greater need this year and through your generosity, we were able to assist 100 families this Holiday Season. You have made a great difference in the lives of the families who received these gifts. The families were in tears when they picked up their packages. Thank you for your kindness and generosity."*

As your church we would like to thank you for your generosity during this past holiday season. So many lives were touched by your contributions of food, presents, money and even the visitations that resulted as part of our Christmas Basket distribution. This was truly a blessed season!

**Congratulations!**

Congratulation to Christopher and Sandra Rhodes on the birth of their son, Thomas Robert Rhodes on November 24, 2004.

Congratulations to Jonathan Klaucke on his Eagle Court of Honor Ceremony which took place on January 2nd. This honor is both a testimony to Jonathan's hard work and to his parents and leaders. So congratulation to Ron and Sue Klaucke for raising another wonderful Eagle Scout!



★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★  
 ★ The First Congregational Church would like to let everyone know that our very own Youth on a Mission contributed \$\$\$\$\$\$\$  
 ★ **ONE THOUSAND DOLLARS** \$\$\$\$\$\$\$  
 ★ to help offset the deficit in our church budget. What a wonderful and generous act from our youth! We thank you for your kindness and your example. You truly are an inspirational group. We are a blessed church.  
 ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

**Library Tidings**

by Gloria Whitehead

Have a heart? Of course you do because without it you wouldn't be reading this. The 14th of this month gives us a double reason to extend our heart felt thanks to all, from little tykes through seniors, who borrow books or have gifted them for others to enjoy.

Just before moving to Florida, Clyde and Phyllis Powell presented the Adult Library with Tim LaHaye and Jerry B Jenkins popular religious fiction series of 12 books. The first, Left Behind, opens with Jesus returning to earth to take his faithful home. The world has plunged into a turmoil. Will the good souls who remain be able to withstand the growing evil? Volume II is Tribulation Force, the continuing drama of those left behind and volume III is Nicolae, the rise of the antichrist. Once catalogued, they will be placed on top of a low bookcase.

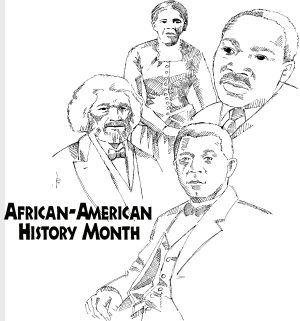
February is also Black History Month. Last year we acquired that beautifully illustrated and compiled book titled African-American Wisdom - a book of quotations and proverbs. It will be on display on the adult table all month. At the very least, glance through it or, at best, borrow it for a week.

Many years ago, Eugene and Margaret Parsons lived in the house across the street from the Church St. entrance to church (next to Mary D. Stone School). They both were writers for the Telegram & Gazette. Mr. Parsons compiled a gardening column while Mrs. Parsons edited the society page of the Sunday Telegram. It was called the Nancy Burncoat page. She also compiled the book review page. They gave us the former long bookcase that was in the library. While scanning through the books a few weeks days ago, we came upon a book titled Famous Black Leaders which they'd given. It's also on display for you to borrow.

The large print edition of Mitch Alkom's, The Five People You Meet in Heaven and The Present (large print) by Spencer Johnson M.D., which will focus on what will make you happy and successful in your work and in your personal life, are both featured this month.

Did you know that we have a published author among us? Maybe you've heard of a Squabbit! Our Jeane Johnson (also mother of Linda Gemme) and her sister, Barbara Bombard, were so captivated by the antics of this little half squirrel and half rabbit that Jeanne wrote and Barbara illustrated an adorable story-with a little lesson—about The Squirrel at the Abbey. Through their generosity, we now have several copies of it in the Children's Library. Word has it that it's on sale at Tatnuck Bookseller. Unfortunately Barbara is now critically ill so please remember her in your prayers.

Happy Valentine's Day!  
 -The Library Committee



**Roof Fund** - To date we have received \$10,000 toward the repair of the roof. In addition, Mike and Cindy Dube have offered to chair a committee to raise funds for the roof repair. Anyone interested should see Mike or Cindy.

**Greetings from your 2005 Board of Trustees!**

This year the Trustees have many challenges ahead of them. First and foremost we have to start seriously weighing our options for replacing the roof over the sanctuary. In the coming months, Trustees both past and present, will be working together to explore all of our options.

An area that has caused a lot of concern over the last year has been building usage. It amazes me the number of squabbles that develop between various groups and committees within our church over building use. We have been blessed with a very large building and such problems should never arise. I truly believe that 99% of the disagreements over building use are dominated by one factor – LACK OF COMMUNICATION! This year I hope to eliminate this communication breakdown so that we can focus on the real building issues at hand, like the roof. If there are any issues you have with building usage, by all means please speak to myself or someone on the Board of Trustees so that we can resolve it as quickly as possible.

The Trustees will be looking for someone to replace Phyllis Powell as our "Kitchen Warden". This person is needed to keep an eye on the kitchen area to make sure it is getting cleaned properly after each use. If anyone is interested please speak to me.

In closing I would like to thank those individuals and organizations who have been generously contributing to the roof fund. To date we have received approximately \$10,000 in donations.

May God bless you and your family in 2005!  
Nick Stockhaus

**The Stewardship Committee**

Welcome to 2005! Again, we want to thank all of you who participated in our 2004 pledge drive. If, during the upcoming year, you find yourself in circumstances where you need to modify your pledge for the remainder of the year, please contact Lori or Nick Stockhaus to make any necessary changes!

Some of us find that "Stewardship" is not only about the pledge drive and fund-raising activities which sustain the life of the Church but it is also about Prayer, Time and Talents which are also sustainers of the Church. As we navigate through the coming year, the Stewardship Committee will touch upon each of these topics with our finale being Pledge Drive 2005.

We look forward to the upcoming year as we celebrate the life of Auburn's First Congregational Church.

Sincerely in His Love,

The Stewardship Committee





### WE ARRIVE EARLY AND STAY LONG

“The Worst humanitarian crisis in the world today” is the description the United Nations used in 2004 for the crisis in the Darfur region of the Sudan, in eastern Africa.

No wonder, when, at the time, more than a million people were displaced from their homes in Darfur, and more than 100,000 others had fled to neighboring Chad. Civilians were subjected to mass rapes and executions. Homes were looted and destroyed, crops ruined, and livestock killed. Even those who made their way to camps for displaced persons were attacked when they took care of necessities like gathering firewood.

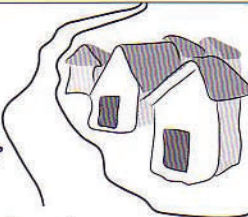
Horrifying photos of mass graves, of entire villages burned down, of children carrying babies toward camp, of bodies left unburied as warnings to survivors, and of other atrocities began to show up on the Internet sites of international agencies.

By the time most Americans saw even the earliest reports of the crisis, the United Church of Christ and our partners were already in action to relieve the suffering in Darfur. The UCC made an initial gift for Darfur to our ecumenical agency Church World Service (CWS) using money previously contributed to One Great Hour of Sharing. CWS has been working in partnership with Action by Churches Together, the Sudan Council of Churches, Norwegian Church Aid and the Catholic organization Caritas Internationalis to bring some relief to people in the Sudan.

Gifts to One Great Hour of Sharing make it possible to offer such early assistance when a crisis begins. Our gifts also make it possible to help to continue long after the news spotlight has faded, leaving behind hundreds of thousands of shattered lives in need of rebuilding. People who used to call Darfur “home” will need us to remember them in years ahead. Through our gifts to One Great Hour of Sharing, we can show them that we care. In such a time of need, we come early and stay long.



*One Great Hour of Sharing is an offering that makes real the love of Christ for individuals and communities around the world who suffer the effects of disasters, conflict or severe economic hardship, and for those who serve them through gifts of money and time.*



**ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING**

**FEBRUARY 20-27**  
**MARCH 6-13**

Hi, this is Katie Jernigan, thanking all who donated to the **Seafarer's Friend**. They were extremely grateful for what we donated. When I went to the **Seafarer's Friend** building, they said that they still needed warm, men's clothing of any size. I will be collecting the clothing through February. In total, we collected the following donations:

75 toothbrushes	46 toothpastes
30 soaps	9 mouthwashes
7 flosses	3 sun blocks
29 deodorants	34 shampoos
28 sewing kits	28 razors
25 shaving creams	1 aftershave
1 first aid kit	25 combs
3 footballs	25 tissues
5 hankies	3 powders
1 eye drops	2 hand creams
2 shower caps	1 shoe polish
1 pr shoelaces	9 calendars
25 note pads	5 note books
52 pencils and pens	13 knitted hats
1 pr mittens	5 20-minute calling cards
15 Yankee Magazines	15 Guidepost Magazines
13 Reader's Digest Magazines	
Candy (Fruit Mentos, Swedish Fish, and Sour Patch Kids)	

Thanks again to everyone for your help in this service project. Your generosity is greatly appreciated. God Bless you!

PS. Thank you Jackie and Auburn Comfort Inn.

### **Attention All Scouts and Parents of Scouts**

Barb Jernigan will be offering a program this spring for the Scout Awards program, which will be open to any Cub Scout, Boy Scout or Girl Scout, including Brownies, who is interested in earning this award. There are four levels of the award: grades 1-3, grades 4-6, grades 7-8 and grades 9-12. If you wish to participate please let Barb know so that she can be sure to order the proper booklets for you. We envision this program to include getting together about once a month to go over and present the things you work on at home. It is not necessary for you to complete the program in a specific amount of time, as long as you begin it in the appropriate grade level.

A NOTE FROM WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP

The Women's Fellowship met on January 15th to elect new officers. Cindy Ryan will remain as President and Sue Campbell will remain as Treasurer. We regretfully accepted Lorraine Johnson's resignation as Secretary, and hope that someone in the congregation will want to assume that role. Please feel free to contact Cindy if you are interested.

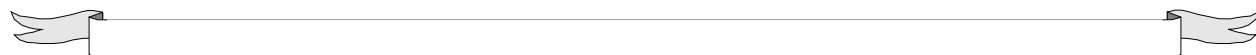
We are also hoping that someone (or a couple of someone's!) will step up to the plate and Chair the Church Fair. There are many people who have contributed for years, and will continue to do so in their respective areas of interest, but we really do need someone to be at the helm. Speaking from personal experience, it is certainly a lot of work, but the rewards and the fellowship and the FUN are well worth it! Plans should be getting underway soon. Again, contact Cindy Ryan if you think you would be interested.

Speaking of the Fair, because we had another successful year, we were able to donate \$5,000 to the Roof Fund, in addition to the \$3,000 donated last year. Thanks for all the hard work everyone!

Women's Fellowship Committee



The First Congregational Church would like to thank the Women's Fellowship Committee for this generous donation. The new roof is something this church needs in order to remain open for those that need the church. It is often daunting when a church is told that they need to spend a large amount of money to purchase something new to replace something old. It is a true testimony to our church that we have met these obstacles head on and with much generosity in the past and present. Like the widowed women who gave her last two copper coins that so pleased Jesus, our Women's Fellowship has given most generously to our church. We thank you!



**A Special Thank You....**to everyone that helped with the Annual Report and the Annual Meeting. Especially to Dottie Eklund for your help with the assembly of the reports and to Cindy Ryan for donating a binding machine to the church. As your new secretary, it has been a very busy time to join your family. Everyone has been very kind and forthcoming with information to help my transition. Please continue to let me know of meeting changes and cancellations and other announcements. You may contact me at 508-832-2845 between 8:30-2:30 P.M. Mon-Fri or email me at [secretary@auburnfirstucc.org](mailto:secretary@auburnfirstucc.org). Thank you!  
-  
Tammy Whittier



## From the Director of Christian Education

One night a man had a dream. He dreamed he was walking along the beach with the Lord. Across the sky flashed scenes from his life. For each scene, he noticed two sets of footprints in the sand, one belonging to him, and the other to the Lord.

When the last scene of his life flashed before him he looked back at the footprints in the sand. He noticed that many times along the path of his life there was only one set of footprints. He also noticed that it happened at the very lowest and saddest times in his life.

This really bothered him and he questioned the Lord about it. "Lord, you said that once I decided to follow you, you'd walk with me all the way. But, I have noticed that during the most troublesome times in my life, there is only one set of footprints. I don't understand why, when I needed you most, you would leave me."

The Lord replied, "My precious, precious child, I love you and I would never leave you. During your times of trial and suffering, when you see only one set of footprints, it was then that I carried you."

Isn't it wonderful to know that God loves us so much that he is always there to get us through the tough places in our lives. God's love is so deep and personal that he knows every detail about us. He knows our joys, our sorrows, our fears, and our hopes. He will always walk with us and even carry us when necessary. Life is not always easy for us, it seems there are trials and complications around every corner, but if we will put our trust in our loving God, we can accomplish all that God has set for us to accomplish.

How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! (1John 3:1). We love because he first loved us. (1John 4:19).

Mercy, peace and love be yours in abundance, this month and all year.

- Barb Jernigan

### The Outreach Committee

To: Our Church Family

From: Dot Koopman, Lorain Johnson, Beth Clark, Ellie Lowell, Nancy Detora, and Ernie Smith

We are your Outreach group. Our job is to disburse aid (monetary and otherwise) beyond the walls of our church. We represent YOU! We want to help areas that are a concern to you. Feel free to ask any questions - or offer suggestion to any one of us.

- Outreach Committee

*As the Father has loved me,  
so I have loved you ...*

*John 15:9*



## ANNOUNCEMENTS

**Wednesday Feb. 2- Feb. 28** - *Here We Grow!* Preschool will be doing their Yankee Candle Fund-raiser. If you would like to place an order, you may do so with the church secretary during office hours.

**Wednesday Feb. 9 at 7 PM** - Ash Wednesday Service.

**Sunday Feb. 6th - Boy Scout Sunday** - mark the date!



**Tuesday Feb. 15 - Here We Grow! Open House** from 12-2 PM. There will be no afternoon session for the students.

**Tuesday Feb. 17 - Baptism Workshop 7 PM** - If you are considering getting your child baptized, please call the office and sign up for one of our (1) one hour workshops held every other month. The next workshop will be April 19th at 7 P.M.

**Saturday Feb. 19th at 5:00 PM - Spaghetti Supper** - Come and join us for our delicious church supper and enjoy our friendly family style atmosphere. Adults are \$8 and children are \$4.

**Vacation Bible School** - Feb. 21-25 from 9 AM to 12 PM. Ages 4 through Grade 6. Lava Lava Island Where Jesus' Love Flows. Please call the office for more information. Applications are in Fellowship Hall. \$5 donations accepted per family.



**Monday Feb. 14 - Valentine's Day!**



**Monday Feb. 21 - President's Day** - the church office will be **closed**. There will be no Librarians meeting this day.

**Friday April 15 - Scholarship Applications Due** - Application are now available in Fellowship Hall and in the church office for anyone interested in applying for a scholarship. A new scholarship fund has been established this year in memory of Ruth Romkey. This scholarship is for someone who is interested in studying in the medical field. This includes nursing and other medical related fields.



**Our Sympathies...to the family and friends of Irene Norton who passed away on January 15, 2005. May God comfort you during this time of loss.**

**From the Board of Deacons**

We begin the new year saying goodbye to Al Boucher, Stu and Sue Campbell and Deb Mahlert, and thank them all for the time and talent they devoted to serving their church as members of the Board of Deacons these past three years. In their places, we welcome Ron Klaucke and Paul and Vickie Powers to the Board.

That still leaves one vacancy to fill – and we would welcome anyone who might be interested to speak with Steve or Shirley Hill or to speak with one of us on a Sunday morning.

Average attendance at Sunday morning worship last year – 59 services in 2004 (including Maundy Thursday) was 133.44. We hope to see at least that many at each service this year. In fact, the Board of Deacons is looking forward to an energetic and prosperous 2005!

Board of Deacons  
January 18<sup>th</sup>, 2005

**From Your Parish Nurse**

February is Heart Health Month. February 4th is National Wear Red Day. I will have information on heart disease on the table in Fellowship Hall, along with Hugs and Kisses. (Hershey's).

It is also National Children's Dental Health Month, with February 4th, being Give Kids A Smile Day. February is also Kids E.N.T. (Ears, Nose, and Throat) Health Month. February 6-12th is National Burn Awareness Week, reminding us of the Shriner's Hospitals and all the wonderful things that they do.

February 14th, besides being Valentines Day, is National Donor Day. This is a reminder of blood and organ donations. If you want any information, I have some and I also have some web sites to get more information.

I am holding off the "Better Endings" program until our snowbirds return in the spring. I am hoping to have Escape School and another children's program this spring. I'm also investigating a screening service that will come and do three vascular screenings and send the results to your Primary Care Physician. I will let you know more about these as they are scheduled. If you have any suggestions for something that we could offer, please let me know.

Sincerely,  
Deb Pranaitis P.N.

**Joyful Noyse Rehearsal Schedule**

**Sunday, Feb. 6,13,20 - 11 A.M. rehearsal**

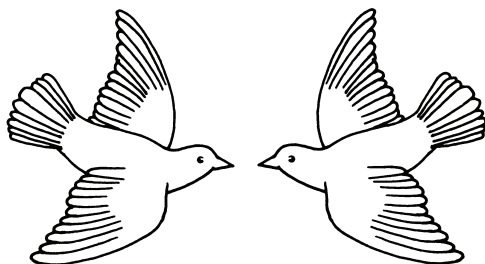
**Sunday Feb. 27 - 9 A.M. rehearsal**  
Anthems: "Ask and Seek and Knock" & "Open our Eyes Lord"

**Sunday, March 6,13,20\* - 11 A.M. rehearsal**

**Sunday, March 27 - 9 A.M. rehearsal**  
Anthems: "Christ is Risen Alleluia" & "Halle, Hallelujah"\*

\*with Adult Choir

All Anthems subject to change



# The Bulletin Board

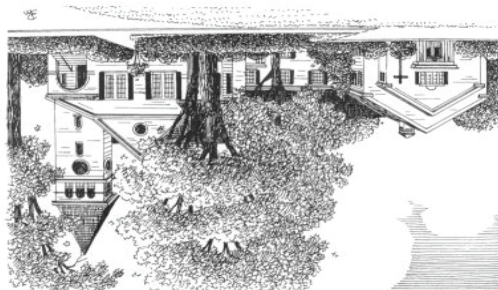
February 4	National Wear Red Day
February 6	Boy Scout Sunday
February 7	Here We Grow! Board & Outreach Meeting 7 PM
February 9	Ash Wednesday Service 7 PM
February 13	Stewardship Meeting after church
February 14	Valentine's Day & Deacons Meeting 7 PM
February 15	HWG Open House 12-2 PM & Trustees Meeting & Baptism Workshop 7 PM
February 16	B.O.C.E Meeting 6:30 PM
February 19	Spaghetti Supper 5 PM
February 20	Music Comm. Meeting after church
February 21	Presidents' Day - Office will be closed
February 21-25	Vacation Bible School 9-12 PM
February 28	Church Council Meeting 7 PM
March 24	Maundy Thursday Service 7 PM
March 27	Easter Sunday (Sunrise Service time TBA) 9 AM Service and 10:30 AM Service

This list does not include weekly reoccurring meetings. All meetings are listed on the calendar insert. Please notify the church secretary immediately if something is *not* listed on the calendar. 508-832-2845.

Web: [auburnfirstucc.org](http://auburnfirstucc.org)  
Fax: (508) 721-2539  
Phone: (508) 832-2845

**First Congregational Church**  
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Auburn MA 01501

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