



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!’”
Isaiah 40:9

FROM THE PASTOR:

“The Temple”

John 2

18 *The Jews then responded to him, “What sign can you show us to prove your authority to do all this?”*

19 *Jesus answered them, “Destroy this temple, and I will raise it again in three days.”*

20 *They replied, “It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and you are going to raise it in three days?”*

21 *But the temple he had spoken of was his body.*

22 *After he was raised from the dead, his disciples recalled what he had said. Then they believed the scripture and the words that Jesus had spoken.*

The Temple in Jerusalem, especially the Holy of Holies, was the one place on earth where God could be imagined to dwell. In the Holy of Holies was the Ark of the Covenant which was God’s earthly throne. The temple was God’s home so humans only rarely entered the temple. They entered to clean and to burn incense. The Holy of Holies is only entered by the high priest on the day of atonement.

The temple was where God lives. God lived in a human body for 30 or so years. God lived on the temple mount in Jerusalem for 1000 years.

For Lent we will be talking about the tabernacle,

the tent of meeting, that preceded the temple; Solomon’s temple, the second temple; Herod’s temple, a.k.a. the third temple, and finally Jesus and the destruction of the temple in 70 AD.

- March 1 Tabernacle
- March 8 David and the Temple of Solomon
- March 15 Ezra’s Temple and the Return from Exile
- March 22 Judas the Hammer and Herod’s Pretty Temple
- March 29 The Temple in Jerusalem Is Destroyed Never to be Rebuilt and the New Temple in Jesus’ Body

The study will begin at 6 p.m. with soup and sandwiches.

Pastor Brian

MARCH SERMON TOPICS

- March 5 “Born Again”
- March 12 Join us in welcoming Rev. Sarah Hubbell, guest preacher
- March 19 “A Healing Becomes a Court Case”
- March 26 “The Valley of Bones”

DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME BEGINS MARCH 12TH.

Remember to set your clocks ahead one hour when retiring on Saturday evening, March 11th.

WED. NIGHT LENTEN SERIES 6-7 P.M. SOUP & SANDWICH PROVIDERS

- 3/1 Stewardship & Music Committees
- 3/8 Board of Deacons
- 3/15 Board of Trustees
- 3/22 Outreach Committee
- 3/29 Board of Christian Ed (BOCE)





Happy Birthday to:

3/9 - Paula Bigelow

3/16 - MacKenzie Young

3/26 - Jean McPherson

3/28 - Ryan Minor

3/29 - Everett Webb

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH'S SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATIONS

We have several scholarships we would like to award to church members seeking to continue their education. Specifically, there are two scholarships dedicated to those studying within the medical field, and one scholarship gives preference to those who are musically inclined and, of course, we have several unrestricted scholarships as well.

Please contact Denise in the church office at 508-832-2845 or email secretary@auburnfirstucc.org to request an application.

APPLICATIONS ARE DUE BY APRIL 15TH.

ESTATE PLANNING?

Have you included the church in your will or estate planning? Please prayerfully consider if the Lord would have you remember your church when completing your will.

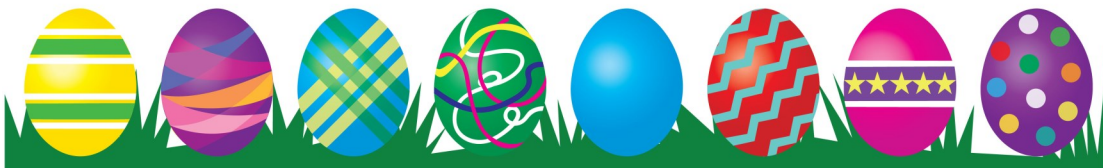
“One of the greatest missing teachings in the American church today is the reminder to men and women that nothing we have belongs to us.”

Gordon MacDonald, American Pastor & Teacher

ANNUAL EASTER EGG HUNT

Our annual Easter egg hunt will be held after the worship service on Palm Sunday, April 2nd.

Please look for a sign-up sheet in fellowship hall so we know how many children to prepare for.



FROM THE DIRECTOR OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

I have a Bachelors of Art in English, from Regis College. The reason I chose English as my major is because, while I had no idea what I wanted to be when I grew up, I knew I loved to read and I loved to write. Words were beautiful to me! The power of an author to present different words in unique patterns was thrilling. I would listen to my professors lecture on various types of literature and some words always stood out more than the rest. One of those words is "JUXTAPOSITION." It is certainly a funny word to say, but what it represents is something I have always embraced. When I looked up some examples of this word, I found my inspiration for my *Tidings*. The example was, "You can see the stars at night, only because of the darkness of space." Juxtaposition is all about first seeing contrast, then understanding the beauty of that contrast because it begins to make sense!

This time of year, especially in the Northeast, Christians are living and trying to understand the greatest juxtaposition of our time. I will set it up for you: The joy of Christmas and the birth of our Savior has passed. The celebration of the new year is also behind us. Even the time of year dedicated to our lovers is a memory. The ground is cold, the trees look dead, roads are dirty from sand and salt and many of us are suffering from the months of short days and long nights. Combine that with the celebration of Lent. Throughout the Lenten season, Christians study and remember the moments leading up to the death of Jesus. For adults, we know that this time for Jesus was filled with mental, emotional and physical anguish. In Mark 1:11-13 God gives us an example of the contrast of light and dark as it refers to His son. (We can call this foreshadowing, which is another favorite word of mine!)

¹¹ *And a voice came from heaven: "You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased."*

¹² *At once the Spirit sent him out into the wilderness, ¹³ and he was in the wilderness forty days, being tempted by Satan.*

So here we are, pushing forward through our darkness. Some of us battling our own demons! It is tradition to give up the things we crave most during this season, and that can be extremely difficult for some people. We are waiting for the light to appear.

The time of Lent leads us to the greatest, most joyful season for Christians. God's promise reveals itself during the celebration of Easter! Christ is Risen! He rose for us! And with that, we have eternal life in Heaven. We have forgiveness for our sins!!! The greatest light we can imagine! After the celebration of Easter, the earth itself begins to change as well. The sun is out longer each day, the ground thaws enough to sow our seeds, the birds chirp louder, the dead trees are suddenly green and bright with color!!! People start to come out of their dark cold houses and enter the warmth and light of the sun. I cannot help but wonder if the darkness helps us to appreciate the light. Jesus suffered for our sins. But because of His suffering, we are saved! We live that juxtapose right alongside Him.

How do we teach the contrast of suffering and being saved, to our children? Well, it can be tricky, and certainly needs to be taught differently to our young ones, then it does to our older children. Children have a special light inside them that dims a little as they become adults. I do not believe they need any darkness to know there is light all around them. They are beautiful and bright and should see this world as such. Therefore, during this season, with the help of Lillian McPherson, Michele Schillinger and all our volunteers, we will focus on the light. We will focus on teaching gratitude for the gift of Jesus! We will continue to teach the children that God loves us so much and His gifts are all around us!!!

Please keep an eye on our Facebook page as we share different ideas for acknowledging the season of Lent, as a family, without all that suffering.

Please keep our YOM teens and leaders in your prayers as we head to Monadnock Mountain for our Encounter weekend March 3-5. A special thank you to Lillian McPherson and Scott Stone for volunteering as chaperones.

Thank you to our entire church community for your love and support! You fill my heart with joy and gratitude, and I know for sure that our children feel that too!!!

Peace and Love,
~Shannon Hartmann



March is Multiple Sclerosis Awareness Month, National Kidney Month, and National Traumatic Brain Injury Month. These are good reminders to consider being an organ donor and to wear helmets when riding bikes and any kind of motorcycle.

I know people have been borrowing items from the health closet and I am glad that we're able to help out. If someone is going for surgery, you can get the items needed before surgery and then you'll be ready when you get home from the hospital.

We're heading to spring with the new leaves on the trees and the flowers starting to come out. New life, new beginnings, thank God for his beautiful creation.

God Bless,

Deborah Pranaitis, Parish Nurse, Cell #: 508-612-4521

Fuel Fund

As a reminder, there are 4 special offering envelopes for the Fuel Fund throughout the year with the next one coming up in April. Any additional donations to help defer fuel costs will be greatly appreciated.

Donations to the Fuel Fund can be made at any time throughout the year. Thank you.

Come swing by for a WW Workshop with me!

At Weight Watchers, we can't wait to help you crush your weight loss and wellness goals! Join us for a workshop here at the First Congregational Church - see days and times below. We're looking forward to seeing you!

Tuesdays 5:30 p.m. Coach Karie
Saturdays 8:00 a.m. Coach Andrea
(Doors open 30 minutes before the workshop.)

Not a member? Check out the current membership promotions on www.ww.com!



weightwatchers
reimagined



RAISE SOME DOUGH!

Here We Grow

Preschool

**will earn 20% of all qualifying sales
from orders placed on March 21st.**

When: Tuesday, March 21, 2023

Time: 4:00 P.M. – 9:00 P.M.

Where: 459 Southbridge Street, Auburn

Phone: 508-832-6583

- When you place your order, tell us you support this fundraiser! Hand us this flyer or show it on a mobile device for your organization to get credit for your order.
- Online orders: Enter code **19** at the payment screen and then click apply.
- **Fundraiser orders are only valid with regular priced menu items and cannot be paired with coupons or deals. Fundraisers are not valid on third party orders.**
- Flyers cannot be handed out in or around the Papa Gino's restaurant on the day of your event.
- Flyers made by the organization will not be accepted for the fundraiser event.
- **RESTAURANT ONLY - Ring in this sale using the POS button 19: Fundraiser.**

Valid for all Dine-In, Carry Out, Online & Delivery orders!

View menu and place online orders at: www.papaginos.com



Here We Grow Preschool

We are just over halfway through our school year, and for the first time in three years I feel like things are running normally. I don't want to jinx us by saying anything, but I am hopeful that spring will be here soon. We had a few really nice days before February vacation and the children enjoyed being outside; we are looking forward to more of them.

Our Prize Calendar Fundraiser will begin March 6. Once again, we have some fantastic prizes available; thank you to all who donated. Denise has some calendars available in the office if you would like to purchase one. The children will start pulling names April 1st and we will post the winners in the Here We Grow entryway.

If you have a friend or family member looking for a preschool for their little one, we would love to meet them. **We will be hosting an Open House on Tuesday, March 7, from 9-11 AM.** If they are unable to attend, please have them call or email the school to schedule a visit. We have finally resumed tours during the school day, which gives families a better sense of what Here We Grow has to offer. Remember, children can start at 2 years 9 months and do not have to be potty trained or residents of Auburn to attend.

Currently, we still have quite a bit of availability in all of our classes. We are trying a new class offering for the fall. This year we will offer a 3 day 9-2:45 class for our Pre-k children; space is limited to 8 children in this class for this year.

We want to give a big shout-out to Nick Stockhaus for upgrading the WiFi; the teachers got new iPads this year and will now be able to use them in their teaching.

Thank you to all who have been participating in our Papa Gino's fundraisers; we appreciate your support.

Have a fantastic month.

Cristi Corey, Director, Here We Grow Preschool

BELL CHOIR SCHEDULE

Rehearsals will be held at 2 p.m. on Sundays during March and on April 2nd, Palm Sunday.

There will be a 9 a.m. rehearsal prior to playing during the service on April 9th, Easter Sunday.

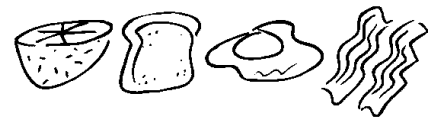
The remaining April rehearsals will be held at 2 p.m.

JOIN US FOR:

**HERE WE GROW PRESCHOOL
OPEN HOUSE**

TUESDAY, MARCH 7, 9-11 A.M.

PALM SUNDAY BREAKFAST



We hope you can join us for our annual PALM SUNDAY BREAKFAST on April 2nd beginning at 8 a.m. Please be sure to sign-up in fellowship hall to aid us in determining amounts to purchase. Thank you!

The Outreach Committee will be arranging for a guest speaker. A free will offering will be taken.

Also, our thanks to Jennifer Bohn and the Outreach Committee for agreeing to prepare the breakfast!

Look for more information to come in the weekly church bulletin.

EASTER PLANT ORDERS



Traditionally, we would have the Easter plant order form in the March *Tidings*; however, with rising fuel costs, etc., Colonial Gardens could not give us a price at this time for the plants they can offer this year. As soon as we have the plant availability and pricing, we will create this year's order form and send it out via email to all those who normally receive the *Tidings* and have an email address on file with the church office.

The delay in receiving pricing/availability information will result in a shorter window in which to order plants this year. Please be on the lookout for the "Easter Plant Order Form" email from the church and place your orders accordingly.

Please note: *if you are not receiving weekly emails from the church office, then we most likely do not have your email address on file.* Please forward your email address to Denise, the church secretary, at secretary@auburnfirstucc.org if you would like an Easter plant form emailed to you. Be sure to include "Easter Plant" in the subject line of your email request.

If you do not have an email address, order forms will be included in the weekly church bulletin or you may call the church office, 508-832-2845, to request that a form be mailed to you.

Thank you,
Michele Schillinger

2023 COMMITTEE/BOARD NOMINEES STILL NEEDED

THE FOLLOWING OPENINGS STILL REMAIN.

BOARD OF DEACONS: Listed in our bylaws there should be 12 Deacons; however, if two vacancies (one 2 year term and one 3 year term) could be filled, then the Deacons would utilize age appropriate acolytes for the church service only.

MUSIC COMMITTEE: one vacancy of 2 years.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES: one vacancy of 2 years.

STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE: one vacancy of 3 years.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE: one vacancy

BOARD OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION: one vacancy of 3 years.

THANK YOU to all who have already committed to joining one or more of our various committees and boards. If you are a church member and interested in filling a nomination, please contact one of the Nominating Committee Members. Sheila Skog may be reached at 978-387-7705 or contact Michele Schillinger, 508-259-2239. Thank you for your help!

One Great Hour of Sharing

The One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS) special mission offering of the United Church of Christ involves you in disaster, refugee/immigration, and development ministries throughout the world. When a disaster strikes or people are displaced or made refugees by violence or extreme poverty, you are part of the immediate response and of the long-term recovery.

Through OGHS you engage in holistic development programs including health care, education, agriculture, food sustainability, micro-financing and women's empowerment. Because the UCC relates in mutual partnership to churches and organizations through Global Ministries and worldwide response and recovery networks, your contributions to One Great Hour of Sharing put you in the right place at the right time for the relief, accompaniment and recovery of the most vulnerable. You meet immediate needs and you address the underlying causes that create those needs in the first place.

You'll find offering envelopes enclosed in this month's *Tidings*. Please drop it in the offering plate on Sunday or mail to: First Congregational Church, 128 Central St., Auburn, MA 01501. Thank you!

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 or PastorBrian@auburnfirstucc.org
*God's church in Auburn Center
 doing Christ's work in the world.*
Web: auburnfirstucc.org



March 2023						
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OR CURRENT RESIDENT