



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!'"

May - the Month that asks Permission

"April showers bring May flowers." So what do May showers bring? As I write this, we are in a drought. I lived in many a drought in South Dakota. I read that the British are going to ban garden hoses this summer. Five water districts have already instituted a ban. Someone caught washing a car or watering a lawn will be fined 1000 pounds sterling or about \$1,700. That is a serious fine. So May showers in England mean being able to run water through a garden hose without a big fine.



In South Dakota May showers can mean a good crop or it can mean not getting the crop in. There is a lot of talk about factory farms and industrial farming. But farmers still rely on the weather. Rain after the seed is in the ground, can help it germinate. But some years the rains came before the fields dried out from snow melt, and large areas were underwater or too muddy to plant. Even industrial farming still depends on what nature provides. Some farmers went bankrupt, lost their land and had to move. So for farmers a drought can mean losing everything and having to give up your chosen career. Farmers in the Dakotas and Nebraska have a very high suicide rate. So May showers not arriving can be fatal.

Historically a drought meant people moved and people died. It still means that in some places. The Horn of Africa is suffering through another drought, a drought to rival the one in the 1980's that inspired *We Are the World*, *Band Aid* and *Live Aid*. These were massive efforts to save millions of lives and three decades later we might need another massive effort to save lives once more.

So what will a drought in our area mean? Will it affect our lives? Will it change our lives forever? Will it only be a momentary annoyance? Can it be a goad to get people for whom drought is not a killer, to help those for whom it is? As they say, "I cried because I had no shoes. Then I met a man who had no feet."

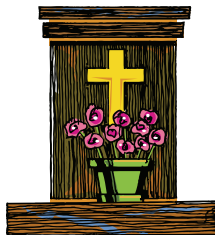
And lastly, "Suicide is a permanent reaction (it is not a solution, just as Ozzy taught us in song) to what is a temporary problem."

~ Pastor Brian

SERMON TITLES FOR MAY

5/6 "Demons of the World vs. God of Love"

5/20 "The Fate of Judas"



FROM THE
Pulpit

5/13 "Laying Down Your Life for a Friend"

5/27 Pentecost/Memorial Sunday
Pastor Brian will be on vacation

Children's Time:

5/6 "Love"

5/13 "Sing a New Song"

5/20 "What Is the World Like?"

5/27 Pentecost/Memorial Sunday
Pastor Brian will be on vacation

Pastor Brian will be on vacation
May 22nd through May 29th.

Carole & Bob Murray
will be celebrating their
special day on May 4th.



**HAPPY
ANNIVERSARY**

Our next **Community Supper**
is planned for
Saturday, May 19th at 5 p.m.

On the menu: **Roast Beef**

Adults \$10 Children \$5

Servers: Board of Deacons

Habitat for Humanity ReStore

ReStore is a unique recycling center that sells donated new and gently used home improvement supplies, building materials and furnishings. Are you looking for inexpensive and attractive home improvement supplies and furnishings? Come, browse **ReStore**.

Have you completed a home project and have left over supplies and materials? Donate them to **ReStore** and let what inspired you, inspire others! Help reduce landfill and receive a charitable tax deduction. Donations for home furnishings, lighting and electrical appliances, building materials, flooring and much more are always needed. **ReStore** on Gold Star Blvd., 11 Distributor Rd., Worcester. Thurs.— Sat. 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Coffee Hour Hosts

5/6	Historian, Memorial, Scholarship & Nominating Committees
5/13	Music Committee
5/20, 5/27	Board of Christian Education

We continue to hold scheduled potluck suppers (a combination of the “Spirit Suppers” and a book/movie club - “Dinner and Discussion”) in the vestry. The next get together will be on **Tuesday, May 22nd at 6:00 p.m.** We will be discussing the book, *Where Is God When It Hurts* by Philip Yancey. **EVERYONE** is invited to join us for any or all parts of the evening.



Looking ahead to our June 26th potluck supper, plan to join us as we discuss *The Screwtape Letters* by C.S. Lewis. Please see Jen Bohn if you have any questions.

HERE WE GROW SUMMER PROGRAM 2012

Here We Grow will be holding its 16th annual summer program this year. Each week we will explore a different topic in a fun, relaxed atmosphere combined with indoor/outdoor gym, enrichment programs, cooking, and Crafts.



The summer program will be offered for 3 weeks. Each week is a five day long session from 9 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. The cost for one week of camp is \$150 for the 1st child and \$120 for the 2nd and 3rd child from the same family. Please call 508-832-8184 for additional information.

THIRD ANNUAL ★ JUNE 9, 2012

Ride for a Reason

Interfaith Hospitality Network of Worcester



A fun, scenic and well-supported bike ride to benefit the
Interfaith Hospitality Network of Greater Worcester

- WHEN:** Saturday, June 9 from 9 am to Noon
- WHERE:** Start and finish at the First Congregational Church of Holden
- RIDE:** 15, 30 and 50 mile options with cue sheets and marked turns; support vehicles to aid riders along the route; rest stops with food, water and first aid; celebration picnic at the end of the ride.
- ROUTE:** Through the towns of Holden, Leominster, West Boylston, Sterling and Princeton; scenic rolling hills.
- SIGN UP:** \$15 (with a commitment to fund raise \$200) or; \$65 (with no additional fund raising)
Children under 16 need to ride with a parent (as we'll be on open roads)
Go to www.ihnworchester.org/event for registration forms.

The Interfaith Hospitality Network is an organization that unites the religious community in an effort to serve and nurture homeless families; providing meals, shelter and hospitality regardless of income and family structure.



Please mark your calendars for **Sunday, June 3rd**, and plan to join us as we celebrate our children on

Children's Sunday.

Following our service that day will be having our annual picnic which will include hamburgers and hot dogs provided by the Board of Christian Education.

We will be looking for donations of desserts and salads, so please look for a sign-up sheet in Fellowship Hall as the date approaches.



On April 22nd we celebrated the baptism of Nicholas Michael Gallo, the 9 month old son of Michael Gallo and Rebecca Richardson. Proud grandparents are Joyce and Bill Richardson. May the Lord bless and keep Nicholas and his loved ones.



Evelyne Rose (Bouvier) Legasey of Auburn passed away on Wednesday, April 4, 2012 at Millbury Health Care Center. She was 86. She leaves her husband of 65 years, William F. Legasey, Jr., her daughter, Sandra Lee Legasey-Feldman and her husband, Glenn Feldman; 4 granddaughters and 7 great-grandchildren. She was preceded in death by her son, Mark W. Legasey.

Evelyne graduated from Sutton High and attended Salter Secretarial School. She worked for the Telephone Co., and for Denholm McKay and later for Cherry Webb Touraine prior to retiring. She was a member of our church and taught Sunday School. A funeral service was held on April 10th at Britton-Wallace Funeral Home. Burial followed in Worcester County Memorial Park, Paxton.

Please keep the Legasey family in your thoughts and prayers.

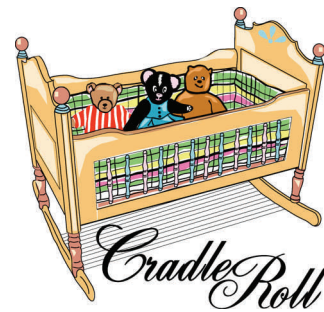
"I am the resurrection and the Life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies."
John 11:25

CRADLE ROLL

5/6	Judy Murphy	5/13	Jen Bohn
5/20	Debbie Pellegrino	5/27	Elizabeth Allain

MIDDLE SCHOOL

5/6	Alex Brownell	5/13	Connie Hanks
5/20	Jen Bohn	5/27	Memorial Weekend



We received the following thank you note:

Dear Here We Grow Families,

On behalf of the children and families here at UMass Memorial Children's Medical Center, we would like to thank you for your donation on March 26, 2012 in honor of Charlotte Silva. Your donation of infant toys, puzzles, games and much more will continue to help us bring joy to children during difficult times throughout the year. We appreciate your generosity. Thank you so very much for thinking of us.

The Child Life Team

UMass Memorial Children's Medical Center

(Charlotte is the younger sibling of a Here We Grow preschooler and is undergoing treatment at this time. Please keep Charlotte and her family in your prayers.)



From **Here We Grow** Preschool

With the month of May here, we are preparing for the end of our school year. The 4-year-old classes will be visiting Mary D. Stone School for a tour of the kindergarten classrooms. Our goal is to help them be at ease with the upcoming transition into kindergarten.

We have been fortunate to have had the Auburn Police, Massachusetts State Police, and Members of the Amber Alert team here in April fingerprinting all our 4 year olds. All information was stored on thumb drives donated by Carole & Dave Sampson's son-in-law. Other visitors this year were the Auburn Fire Department, the Tooth Fairy and the Auburn Children's Librarian. Thank you to all community groups for their continued support.

With the nice weather upon us, we are spending more time in the outdoor playground.

This year the 2-day classes will be visiting Stowe Farm for their end-of-year field trip. The 3-day and 5-day classes will be visiting the Discovery Museum in Acton and will be traveling by bus provided by AA Transportation.

Closing out the school year will be the 3 year olds' program, the 4 year-olds' graduations and Spree Day for all. This is our busiest time of the year, but a very rewarding time of year. Some families will be leaving HWG for good, some for the summer and some with a year or two off until the younger siblings are of age to come back. Yes, I have already started a wait list for the year '13/'14. Whatever each family is doing, it is a time for goodbyes. We will miss each and every one of them.

Once again some of the staff will be returning for the last two weeks of June and the second week of July to work the summer program. Themes this year are: Exploring the Great Outdoors, Off to the Olympics and Fun in the Sun. If you know of anyone looking for a summer program, please send them our way. HWG will close on July 13th for the summer and will return late in August.

At this time I would like to thank Sue Campbell for the years she has donated to Here We Grow as FCC Second Assistant Financial Secretary. We will truly miss her, but know that she deserves "free time" to enjoy the simpler things in life.

As of this writing the present staff will be returning next year, but one never knows. I'll keep you informed as to any changes.

Until next month, enjoy spring.

Dawn Murphy
Director
Here We Grow Preschool

Library Tidings by Gloria Whitehead

With 16 people, creative writers, choosing a subject that influences them in some way to fill 7 or 8 of 139 pages, you're certain to find several gems. A clinical psychologist, ordained Methodist minister and associate publisher of *Zion's Herald* (an independent religious journal published by the *Boston Wesleyan Journal*) is Andrew J. Weaver. His co-editor, Donald E. Messer, has also authored many books and is a Methodist minister. Further, he is President Emeritus and Henry White Warren Professor of Practical Theology at Iliff School of Theology in Denver.

Chances are that you will be totally surprised at how friendship nurtured and sustained by the power of prayer and the mercy of God has blessed all of our lives. At last, the book's title is, *Connected Spirits*, and it is filled with a broad selection of friendship stories. Some could influence your life and its quality. Among older people, 80% of their closest friends are from their church congregation. For quick clues to quick inspiration, the following is only half of the list of titles:

- “Transcendent Friendships: The Journey to Spiritual Growth”
- “He Lives on Death Row: An Imprisoned Friend”
- “The ‘Holy Friends’ of a Global Journalist”
- “Won't You Be My Neighbor?”

An “Interlude”: Among 2 dozen books on “nonfiction friendship,” *The Teammates: A Portrait of a Friendship* by David Halberstam stands out. Captured on canvas are the four great Red Sox players, Ted Williams, Johnny Pesky, Dominic DiMaggio and Bobby Doerr – a precious palette of friendship. The “Interlude” is almost a misfit in this writing BUT it does reflect endurance when life's associations along its road are set with worthy goals with friends who share each other's values.

Now, additional titles from *Connected Spirits*:

- “Friendship Embodied and the Life of the Spirit”
- “So What If My Best Friend Is a River”
- “A Dialogue Between Two Friends”
- “Living By God's Grace: Agnes, Anna and Agnes”
- “Friends Who Harvest Hope”

You have the best to discover as you read, for little is related in these penned words. Instead, begin to turn the 139 pages of a multitude of experiences and adventures. (Our thanks to Jean McPherson for donating this book.)

Summer will soon be here. Don't forget to take time for you – to relax and read – to travel in an armchair – meet interesting individuals and become exposed to new thoughts, and, as to friends – what joy can be felt when sharing such an unlimited amount of “things” to treasure.

Wishing you delightful days ahead,
Your Library Friends

A mother is that someone
With a mission from above
Imparting to her children
The image of God's love

Sue Skeen



**MOTHER'S
DAY Sunday, May 13th**

Mark your calendars for Sunday, May 27th, as the Auburn American Legion joins us in our Sunday worship service at 10:00 a.m.



All veterans are invited to attend and come in uniform or veteran's group attire.

We thank them for their sacrifice and service to God and country.

OUTREACH NEWS



On Saturday, May 5th, at 11:00 a.m. the Outreach Committee is planning a visit to the Dismas Family Farm in Oakham, MA and you're invited! As you may recall, the farm is a rehabilitative residential program for people who are homeless and former prisoners. This working farm produces crops, animals, and finished wood products, as well as jams, granola and candles. The year round housing lodges former prisoners that are expected to either work the farm or be employed full-time as they reintegrate back into society.

Our visit will include a tour of the farm, lunch (which we will provide) and a ride to the top of the haystacks (weather permitting). **Anyone wishing to join us** should speak with one of the Outreach Members: Pat Bukoski, Sue Campbell, Marilyn Plue and Debbie Pranaitis.

Massachusetts Conference, United Church of Christ 213th ANNUAL MEETING ~ June 15 & 16, 2012 Sturbridge Host Hotel & Conference Center



Be Transformed!

"Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God – what is good and acceptable and perfect."

~ Romans 12:2

Dear Members of the Massachusetts Conference, United Church of Christ:

How will we individually and collectively be transformed as we move together into the future of the United Church of Christ? How will we discern and work towards transformational ministries at the local, association and conference levels in the name of Jesus Christ?

Staff and Annual Meeting planners have received strong and consistent feedback on the hope that we could return to an overnight schedule. Folks wanted more time to delve into the topics and themes presented, more time to visit the marketplace, and, in particular, more time to build relationships and reconnect with friends. As a result, we are returning to an overnight format including some business, community time, worship, and theme presentation on Friday evening. We hope you will be able to join with your brothers and sisters in faith for this whole experience.

The Rev. J. Bennett Guess, Executive Minister for Local Church Ministry, one of our five Collegium of Officers, United Church of Christ will be with us keynoting on Friday evening and preaching on Saturday morning. We are gifted to have such a transformational leader present with us around this theme -- Be Transformed.

The Sturbridge Host and Hotel Conference Center is providing a special rate for early reservations (The cutoff date for the hotel special rate is May 25th.). Check the Registration Form for details. I look forward to seeing you in Sturbridge on June 15th & 16th.

Grace and peace,
Nancy Lawrence
Chairperson, Annual Meeting Planning Committee
Member, First Church in Sandwich, UCC

Register for the annual meeting online at macucc.org.
(Registration forms are also available in the church office.)
Registration deadline is June 1st.

Greetings from the Central Association. I am Rev. Doreen Oughton, and I serve on the nominating committee of the Central Association Board of Directors. As member churches of the United Church of Christ, we are covenant partners with the national denomination, the Massachusetts Conference, and the Central Association of the UCC. This covenant gifts us with blessings and rights, as well as responsibilities to each body. I am writing to ask you to consider serving in the Association by accepting a nomination for the Board of Directors or the Committee on Ministry. Participation of laity on these committees is vital to their integrity. The only requirement is membership in a Central Association church.

The Board calls and plans the Association meetings; has a representative preside over Ecclesiastical Councils, Ordinations, and Installations; meets at least five times through the year to hear reports from standing committees, the Conference and WAMS; serves as trustee for Association assets; creates Ad Hoc Working Groups or Task Forces to benefit the Association; and hears appeals from the Committee on Ministry or Fitness Review determinations. The Board meetings are held on the third Thursday, mid-late afternoon, in Worcester. The term for Board members is two years.

The Committee on Ministry oversees all issues of clergy ordination, licensing, and fitness in the Association, as well as the standing of Association churches. The term is three years, and the Committee meets monthly on the third Thursday from 9am-2:30 pm in Worcester. One- and two-year slots are available for people who want to try it out before making a longer commitment. It is a significant investment of time and energy, but it is also an awesome, committed group of people doing important work. You will learn much about the denomination, the ordination processes, leadership and ministry.

Nominations will be made at the spring meeting on May 6, so please give some thought to serving, and let me know by e-mailing me at pastorfccleicester@verizon.net or by calling 978-846-6498. You can also contact Rev. Phil LaFollette at revphilucc@comcast.net.



From the Stewardship Committee

Step It Up and share with us!

We are looking for our own "high steppers," as we like to call them -- folks with stories of how First Congregational has helped them step it up to a more fulfilled life, or a new level of understanding or spiritual joy.

We appreciate those of you who have already stepped forward and volunteered to share your experiences with all of us. Thank you so much! We will be in touch.

We would like to get a couple more people to participate. We would love to hear from you! We can all benefit from your story. It need not be a long speech, just an anecdote or two would be great.

"Hide not your talents, they for use were made:
What's a sun-dial in the shade!"
(Poor Richard's Almanac)

Please give some serious thought to sharing with us. If you would like to participate, just let a member of Stewardship know. Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,
your Stewardship Committee
(Ellie Lowell, Donna Dube, Linda Hardy, Shirley Hill)



May is Arthritis Awareness Month, Global Employee Health and Fitness Month, Hepatitis Awareness Month, and Better Hearing and Speech Month. It is also Healthy Vision Month, Lupus Awareness Month, Melanoma/Skin Cancer Detection and Prevention Month. It's Mental Health Month, National Asthma and Allergy Awareness Month, National High Blood Pressure Education Month, National Physical Fitness and Sports Month, National Osteoporosis Awareness and Prevention Month, and Ultraviolet Awareness Month.

- May 6-12 Children's Mental Health Awareness Week and North American Occupational Safety and Health Week
- May 7-11 Air Quality Awareness Week
- May 7-13 National Stuttering Awareness Week
- May 13-19 Food Allergy Awareness Week, National Women's Health Week, and National Alcohol and Other Drug Related Birth Defects Awareness Week.
- May 14 National Women's Check-Up Day
- May 14-18 National Neuropathy Awareness Week
- May 18 HIV Vaccine Awareness Day
- May 19 Hepatitis Testing Day
- May 20 World Autoimmune Arthritis Day
- May 25 Heat Safety Awareness Day

Be prepared for the heat. Drink fluids (alcohol and caffeine act as diuretics), use sunscreen, wear sunglasses.

The closet is full. If you need something, please help yourself. Also help yourself to any information on the health table in Fellowship Hall. I have quite a bit about several types of cancer, even for friends and loved ones of someone with cancer. God Bless!

Debbie Pranaitis, Parish Nurse

YARD SALE CANCELLED

I want to thank the handful of people that expressed an interest in helping with the Yard Sale. Unfortunately, there were not enough who were willing to take responsibility for what needs to be done to go ahead with the event.

Cindy Dube



ATTENTION ALL 8TH AND 9TH GRADE STUDENTS

We will be starting a Confirmation Class in September. There will be an informational meeting immediately following our worship service on Sunday, June 3rd, for all parents and confirmands.

Confirmation Classes will be held weekly on Sundays in the green room from 11:30a.m. - 12:30p.m. beginning September 9th.

FROM THE DIRECTOR OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

I hope you all had an enjoyable Easter with family and friends. I want to thank Victoria & Cassandra Stockhaus and Lillian, Jacob and Haydn McPherson for participating in the Sunrise Service. We had representatives from 4 area churches!

Victoria, Cassandra and Lillian went on to sing at both services here at the church. It is wonderful to see the dedication these young ladies have in an age where church is not a popular choice among many teens, especially at 5 a.m.!

The Easter egg hunt was a big success!! We had 23 kids registered and all went away with toys and candy as well as smiles. Thank you to the entire Youth On a Mission group for assisting with this activity.

I am still looking into mission trips for the summer and will keep you posted.

June 3 will be Children's Sunday with the annual church picnic after the service. Also on Sunday, June 3rd, following worship there will be an informational meeting for parents and teens interested in our upcoming Confirmation Class starting up in September. So, look in your bulletin for more information to come on these and more. Coming soon...

With His guidance we serve,

Jean McPherson

Director of Religious Education

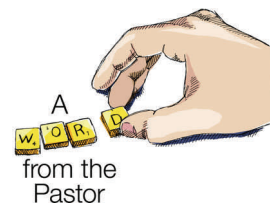


YARD SALE/FLEA MARKET/CRAFT FAIR

This event, sponsored by FASCA (Friends of the Auburn Senior Center), will be held rain or shine on Saturday, June 23, 2012 from 8:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., at the Lorraine Gleick Nordgren Senior Center, 4 Goddard Drive in Auburn. Inside tables (\$20) and outside spaces (\$10) are available, along with a lovely gazebo space available for \$35. The proceeds from table and space rentals will be used to support programs and events at the senior center.

Take advantage of this opportunity to gather up those items sitting in your garage, attic or basement and sell them at this wonderful community event. All are welcome to participate. For more information about table and space reservations, please call FASCA Member, Ann Weston at 508-832-2833.

Calling All Graduates . . . If you are aware of any students who will be graduating this spring, please email Denise at secretary@auburnfirstucc.org or call the Church office, (508) 832-2845. We would like to acknowledge our graduates in next month's *Tidings* and future bulletins.



I would like to thank Jen Temple and Sue Campbell for making the crosses out of the Palm Sunday palms. They were a big hit with our nursing home residents and shut-ins.

Pastor Brian

*First Congregational Church of Auburn
11th Annual Golf Tournament*

Saturday August 4th, 2012

Pine Ridge Country Club in Oxford, MA

12:30 p.m. Registration - 1:30 p.m. Tee-off

\$100 per player - includes golf, cart and dinner!

Non-golfers welcome to join us for dinner - \$30 per person



-----detach here-----

Players:

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____
- 4. _____

Sponsor a Hole - \$100.00

In Honor of: _____

In memory of: _____

or Business name: _____

Make checks payable to: First Congregational Church (write "GOLF" in memo)

Church World Service - Blankets+

Blankets+ (formerly called Tools & Blankets) is a special mission opportunity that can involve all ages. Some 8,000 congregations and groups across the United States hold CWS Blankets+ events, providing funds to help people in need around the world, including the U.S.

Your contributions provide the means to transform lives and communities when they are faced with an emergency or simply struggling to put food on the table. For over 60 years, Church World Service has worked in partnership with local communities to identify their needs and access the resources they need to build the foundation for a more viable future, including:

- Blankets, tents, food and other emergency supplies in the wake of a disaster
- Tools and seeds for refugees returning home to replant their fields
- Wells for families living in drought prone areas to provide clean, safe water to drink and to irrigate crops and gardens
- Literacy training and microcredit for women struggling to realize their potential.

Church World Service Blankets+ . . . It's about blankets and so much more!

You will find an offering envelope enclosed in this month's *Tidings*. Please make checks out to First Congregational Church and note "Blankets+" in the memo section. You can place the envelope in the offering plate on Sunday, or mail it to us at First Congregational Church, 128 Central Street, Auburn, MA 01501. Also, if you would like to make a donation in honor of a loved one, CWS has provided us with special cards for this purpose. They even have cards specific to Mother's and Father's Day. Look for sample cards on the table in Fellowship Hall. (There is no charge for the cards.)

For He delivers the needy when they call, the poor and those who have no helper. Psalm 72:12

CONVERSATION BEFORE THE CRISIS:

“What Do I, and My Loved Ones, Need to Understand Before I Die?”

This free forum is sponsored by:
The Friends of the Auburn Senior Citizens Association and
Emeritus at Eddy Pond Assisted Living

Date: Saturday, May 5th ~ 9:30 a.m. to 11 a.m.
Where: The Woods at Eddy Pond, 667 Washington St., Auburn

Free Continental Breakfast from 9 to 9:30 a.m.

Guest Speaker: Madeline Presz RN-BC, CHPN, Sol Amor Hospice
Featured Panel Speakers: Sol Amor Hospice Team

Discussion Topics Include:

- My Quality of Life, at the End of My Life
- Who Is There for My Loved Ones?
- What Is Hospice?
- Spiritual Care
- Keeping Me Pain Free
- Comfort Care
- Medicare Benefit
- Bereavement Support

Please contact Eric Kessler by Thursday, May 3rd to reserve your seat
774-275-7005 or eddypondlodge-crd@emeritus.com

TIDINGS is a monthly publication of

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United Church of Christ
128 Central St., Auburn MA 01501**

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*God's church in Auburn Center
doing Christ's work in the world.*

Web: auburnfirstucc.org



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Auburn, Mass

May 2012

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OR CURRENT RESIDENT