

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

“April Showers Bring May Flowers”

As a child I remember my mom saying, “April showers bring May flowers,” as I looked out the screen door at the rain falling. It meant another day that I had to play inside. In the days before video games playing inside was the worst. My mom did not want me making loud engine or explosion sounds. I was not to run around and bump into things. Playing indoor was to be quiet play. Quiet, fun play is not possible.

When it rained, my mom liked it quiet. I think the rain helped her sleep. For some reason the sounds of the Indy 500 or WWII did not help her sleep.

The saying, “April showers bring May flowers,” was supposed to teach me that the bad thing today would bring benefits later. For a young boy, is May flowers really a benefit? If the saying was April showers bring April mud which your mother will not yell at you for playing in, that would have been a benefit.

Most of my childhood play involved getting wet, muddy, or dirty. I played in the sandbox, which was really a dirt patch where grass would not grow. I played in the little streams formed by snow melt. I played in bigger streams using big rocks to form dams or racing stick boats.

Playing in the snow was done a lot. I played outside until part of my body got numb. I would guess as much time was spent putting on snowsuits, gloves and hats as was spent actually playing in the snow. What is it about the sound of a snowsuit zipper that made me immediately need to use the bathroom?

Another thing April showers would bring is high water. Often the Androscoggin River would flood; houses near the river would be damaged or swept away. Roads would be blocked and we would have to take long detours around the flooded areas.

One of the blessings we received this spring was that there was no flooding. The record snow melted slow and steady, so the rivers never leapt their banks. We often do not see the blessings God gives us. I imagine a lot of emergency managers were planning for floods that, thank God, have not come.

I imagine playing in the rain involved, in my mother’s mind, 60 pounds of mud brought in the house by a 40 pound kid. It involved *wet everything*, ruined clothes, and the sniffles. Playing in the rain would be cold, and clammy, and wet. But, I still wanted to do it. Until I was an adult. Many things we did or wanted to do as children, we forgot or abandoned as adults. *“When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things.”*

So when I hear the rain fall on the roof, from time-to-time I think of that young boy who wanted so bad to play in the mud and hated naps ... and I lay down and take a nap.

May we all enjoy May flowers.

Pastor Brian

SERMON TITLES FOR MAY

5/3 “Cornelius”

5/10 “Baptism of the Eunuch”

5/17 “Finding the New . . .”

5/24 “The Spirit”

5/31 “Seeing God”

DRIVEWAY FUND UPDATE

We are still seeking additional donations for the Driveway Fund. The balance on the loan for the 2013 driveway paving project stands at \$5,200 with \$2,700 outstanding in driveway pledges. Therefore, we have a shortfall of \$2,500. Please prayerfully consider making a donation to the driveway fund.

Thank you!

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



Coffee Hour Hosts

5/3	Board of Trustees
5/10	Board of Christian Education
5/17	Financial Secretaries/Treasurers
5/24	Stewardship Committee
5/31	Personnel Committee
6/7	Prudential Committee

MOTHER'S DAY BAKE SALE

The Choir and Music Committee are joining efforts by holding a bake sale fundraiser during coffee hour on Mother's Day. So look no further when in need of something delicious for Mother's Day on May 10th!



BAKE SALE

Please mark your calendars for **Sunday, May 31st**, and plan to join us as we support our youth in their commitment to God and our church.



CONFIRMATION

SUNDAY IS

MAY 31ST

at 10 A.M.

Join us at our monthly potluck suppers and book/movie club - "Dinner and Discussion" in the vestry. The next get together will be on **Tuesday, May 19th, beginning at 6 p.m.** when we will discuss the book, *Kisses from Katie — A Story of Relentless Love & Redemption* by Katie Davis. "When an 18-year-old from Nashville visits Uganda on a mission trip, she is so affected that she moves back for one year to teach in an orphanage. Faced with a choice between the United States, her parents' wishes for her college education, her boyfriend, and staying in Uganda, Katie must decide: will she give up her life and buy a one-way ticket to Uganda? As the subtitle suggests, this is a story of an amazing young woman with no limits to love." *Publishers Weekly*

Church World Service - Blankets+

Blankets+ (formerly called Tools & Blankets) provides funds to help people in need around the world, including the U.S. Donations 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 providing 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, and literacy training and microcredit for women struggling to realize their potential. Church World Service Blankets+ . . . It's about blankets and so much more!

An offering envelope is enclosed in this month's *Tidings*. Please make checks out to the church noting "Blankets+" in the memo section and place in the offering plate on Sunday, or mail a check directly to the church:
128 Central St., Auburn, MA 01501. Thank you!



May is Arthritis Awareness Month, Better Hearing and Speech Month, Healthy Vision Month, and Hepatitis Awareness Month. It is also Melanoma/Skin Cancer Detection and Prevention Month, Mental Health Month, National Asthma and Allergy Awareness Month, National Physical Fitness and Sports Month, National Stroke Month, and Ultraviolet Awareness Month.

May 5 is Hand Hygiene Day

May 10-16 is National Women's Health Week

May 11 is National Women's Check-up Day

May 11-17 is National Stuttering Awareness Week

May 12-16 is National Neuropathy Awareness Week

May 18-24 is Recreational Water Illness and Injury Prevention Week

May 22 is Heat Safety Awareness Day

May 24-30 is Hurricane Preparedness Week

May 27 is National Senior Health and Fitness Week

May 31 is World No Tobacco Day

These are some of the awareness topics that are listed in the World Health Organization Calendar. Some are good reminders for the upcoming summer season. There will be more information on the table in Fellowship Hall.

Stay safe this spring and summer.

God Bless!

Debbie Pranaitis
Parish Nurse

THANK-YOU

We want to thank Ron and Connie Hanks for, once again, organizing the Easter flower orders.

This is no small task as they coordinate the details with the florist, prepare spreadsheets of the orders, pick up the plants at the greenhouse in Oxford, label each plant, and deliver and arrange them in the sanctuary. We just want to take this opportunity to express our warm appreciation for all they do!

SPECIAL MAY COMMUNITY SUPPER

Our next Community Supper will be held on Saturday, May 16th, at 5 p.m. It will be a special outreach supper (not a fundraiser) and many church volunteers will be needed to ensure its success. So, please mark your calendars and look for more info to come in future bulletins or call the church office. Thank you!

Please be in prayer for the MacLeod Family due to the recent passing of the Rev. Bob MacLeod.



Deaths in Our
Church Family

The Rev. Robert J. MacLeod, 96, of West Millbury, Massachusetts died peacefully during Holy Week. He is survived by his beloved wife, Nancy Fay, sons, Roderick (and Betsy) MacLeod, David (and Debra) MacLeod, Bruce MacLeod (partner Beverly McGrath), daughter, Judith (and Scott) Froman; his brother, Roderick C. MacLeod; grandchildren Bonnie (and Chris) Luker, Scott (and Nicole) MacLeod, Peter MacLeod; Adam (and Jelena) MacLeod, Ben MacLeod, Rhiannon and Michael Froman, and great-grandchildren, Max and Thad Luker.

Bob grew up in Brighton, Massachusetts, and graduated from Boston Latin High School, Marietta College, and Andover Newton Theological School. He was ordained in 1946 and served Congregational and United Church of Christ congregations in Ohio, New Hampshire (Newport), and Massachusetts (Boylston, Stoughton, Middleboro, Newburyport). He served as Minister of Visitation here at our church and as Interim Minister in Wrentham, Massachusetts. Abundant pride in his family made his eyes twinkle and smile beam. A memorial celebration was held on Saturday, April 18th, here at our church.

Donations may be made in honor of Rev. Robert J. MacLeod payable to "First Congregational Church" noting "Memorial Fund" in the memo section or make a donation to a social justice organization of one's choice.

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

John 11:25

THE AUBURN WOMAN'S CLUB PRESENTS

"Bathsheba Spooner, the First Murder for Hire"

The event will be held here at FCC on May 12th at 7:30 p.m.
Dessert and coffee will be served and there will be a 50/50 drawing.

Please see enclosed flyer for additional information.

FROM THE DIRECTOR OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

We are finally enjoying the long awaited start of spring. On Easter morning many of us joined with the confirmands to welcome the sun of Easter morning. They all did a wonderful job reading scripture and poems. The confirmands are nearing the end of their lessons and beginning the writing of their statements of faith. Please keep them all in your prayers as they reflect on this very important journey they are on. **Confirmation Sunday is May 31.**

While we were at CityReach in Boston, each group that was in attendance needed to come up with a way to keep the feelings and philosophy of CityReach alive in the hearts and minds of everyone there. As a group, we decided to have a toiletries drive complete with sunscreen. As the warm weather is upon us, we need to keep our homeless brothers and sisters in mind and we decided that sunscreen is a much needed, but often neglected, item that is donated. Please bring your donations to church and we will distribute them to CityReach or a Worcester based homeless organization.

The Easter egg hunt was a sweet success! I don't think I have ever had to move the hunt inside due to snow (and hope I don't have to ever again)! Thank you to all my "bunny helpers" you certainly were creative with some of your hiding spots.

I have a bunch of brochures of Christian summer camps in my office if anyone is interested. Just come see me. There are day camps, overnight and family camps. Just let me know, and you can look them over.

Enjoy the beauty that God has shared with us.

With His guidance we serve,

Jean McPherson, Director of Religious Education



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 Worcester Police, Massachusetts State Police, Members of the Amber Alert team, and Maggie Bish visit us in April to do fingerprinting of all graduating 4-year-olds. Thanks again to Pat Bukoski for the donation to purchase the thumb drives. Thank you to all community groups for their continued support.

We have invited "seniors" from First Congregational Church to visit **Here We Grow** on May 1st and spend time in the classrooms with our 4-year-olds. This is in place of our yearly visit to Life Care of Auburn; we just couldn't make it happen so we will try something new. We have a special day planned for those from the church who are brave enough to spend the day, do some crafts, music with Bonnie, have snack, and read a story. I'll let you know how things go next month.

With the nice weather upon us, we are spending more time in the outdoor playground. Thank you to Wayne Prouty for cleaning up the playground.

This year the 2-day classes will be visiting Giguere's Gym in Cherry Valley for their end-of-year field trip. The 3-day and 5-day classes will be visiting the YMCA in Shrewsbury and will be traveling by bus provided by AA Transportation. Both trips are usually full of fun and exploration.

Closing out the school year will be the 3-year-olds program in their classrooms, 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 also. Some families will be leaving **Here We Grow** for good, some for the summer, and some with a year or two off until the younger siblings are of age to come back. 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 three weeks of June to work the summer program. Themes this year are: "It's a Jungle Out There," "Once Upon a Time," and "A Pirate's Life for Me." If you know of anyone looking for a summer program, please send them our way. **Here We Grow** will close on July 3rd for the summer and will return late in August.

Until next month, enjoy Spring —

Dawn Murphy
Director
Here We Grow Preschool

We celebrate with the Klaucke Family on the recent birth of Greta Love Klaucke who was born on April 2nd at 8:46 a.m., weighing in at 7 lbs., 7 oz. and 20.5 inches long. Greta is the daughter of Jonathan and Jillian Klaucke and proud grandparents are Susan and Ronald Klaucke. We're told the family is doing very well and, of course, Greta is adorable! Congratulations to all!



It's a Girl!

Dear Friends of Worcester Fellowship,

I am writing to let you know that I have been called to a new job as the Minister to the Affiliates of Ecclesia Ministries. This means I will be helping outdoor churches throughout the United States to strengthen their ministries, and encouraging people to start new ministries. This requires that I resign as the Co-Pastor of Worcester Fellowship. Warren Hicks is already our new Executive Director.

My last day at Worcester Fellowship was Sunday, April 26, 2015. I will start at my new position on June 1. Of course, I will continue to work on my Doctor of Ministry Dissertation over the next year.

Please save the evening of May 30th for a gathering to celebrate our ministry together at a site to be determined.

I knew when I was called to Graduate Studies that this meant that God probably had ideas for something new. I'll admit, I thought that meant *after* I finish! But it is clear that this new opportunity matches my education, experience, and calling.

To be honest, you and the community of Worcester Fellowship have given me the training I need for this new work. All of you, the people who come for lunch, the people who just stop by to say, "hi," the people who bring lunch and hot cocoa and socks, the ministry support team, the people who fund this ministry, even the police officers watching from a distance, all of you, have taught me this ministry. Thank you!

Over the next few weeks, I hope we will spend time together. At the same time, I encourage you to spend the next weeks connecting with the other Pastors at Worcester Fellowship. Noelle, Warren, and Georgeanne are ready to listen to your stories, to be your connection to this ministry, to be your partners in helping to show and share God's loving spirit which is calling you into the world and ministry on God's behalf.

In the Peace of Christ,

-Liz

(The Rev.) Elizabeth M. Magill www.worcesterfellowship.org

WORCESTER FELLOWSHIP's Annual Sock Hop!



Saturday, May 16, 2015
6 to 8:30 pm

At the Wesley United Methodist Church
114 Main St., Worcester, MA 01608

Come & Dance your socks off! ~ Ken's DJ Music

Please RSVP by May 8th to office@worcesterfellowship.org

People who own a home AND have a job \$25 to \$50 per person
People with a rented home AND/OR a job \$5 to \$25 per person
People without a home or without a job \$1 to \$5 per person
All donations are gratefully accepted!

Those
Graduating
In Our
Church



Calling All Graduates . . .

If you are aware of any students with ties to First Congregational who will be graduating this spring, please email Denise at: secretary@auburnfirstucc.org or call the Church office, (508) 832-2845. Please include where they're graduating from and when, details of their future plans, and list family members (parents/grandparents) who are known within the church.

We would like to acknowledge our graduates in the June Tidings and future bulletins.

Thank you so much for everything people have done in helping out over the last month.

It is much appreciated.

Nancy & the MacLeod Family

Massachusetts Conference, United Church of Christ 216th ANNUAL MEETING ~ June 12 & 13, 2015

University of Massachusetts (Hotel UMass), 1 Campus Center Way, Amherst, MA

The Annual Meeting is one of those rare opportunities to gather together with brothers and sisters of faith from places beyond our local church setting. We experience something of the breadth and depth of the Body of Christ – and know that we are part of something Big! Come to re-connect with friends, for the conversations, the worship, fellowship, and the business of the Conference. Come to learn and to be inspired by dynamic preaching. Come to celebrate, worship, and be joyful together! Go to: www.MACUCC.org to register.

We are excited about our new venue at the University of Massachusetts (UMASS) Amherst with its great facilities, food, and opportunities to be outside from time to time. We hope you will join us!

Theme: *But we have this treasure in clay jars, so that it may be made clear that this extraordinary power belongs to God and does not come from us. – 2 Corinthians 4:7.* Our Annual Meeting will be an opportunity to focus on the “treasure” – the glory of God, carried and made visible in particular ways in each person present, and in our work together as the Body of Christ.

Keynote Speaker and Preacher - The Rev. Nadia Bolz-Weber is founding pastor of House for All Sinners and Saints, a Lutheran mission church in Denver, Colorado. Learn more about Nadia at www.nadiabolzweber.com. Her keynote address will be open to the public, so invite your friends to join you for this part of the meeting!

The **Fall Fair Extravaganza** is planned for **Oct. 10th & 11th**. We are excited and anticipate another successful fair! (Last year we raised over \$6,000!) and once again we're reaching out to the congregation for your ideas! As you may recall, last year we had various themes or themed tables such as crafts, jellies/jams (food items), Christmas/Halloween sections, etc. To ensure its success, the planning must begin NOW!

This is a great opportunity to get to know the rest of your church family! Please contact Cindy Ryan at 508-832-3416 and let her know you're interested in being a part of this church fundraiser. Also, be sure to look for info on craft nights in future bulletins.



COMMUNITY YARD SALE---PLANT SALE---COOKOUT

SATURDAY, JUNE 13th



Yard Sale

Spring cleaning? Don't throw that good "stuff" away. Recycle it by selling it to someone who needs it! Do you have an accumulation of things that are just too good to throw away, but you no longer need? Don't have enough to hold your own yard sale? Join us on the church lawn for our

COMMUNITY YARD SALE!



Spaces are \$15 for church members, \$20 for non-members. Use of a table is \$5 per table. Please contact Cindy Dube at 508-832-6646 or Denise in the church office at 508-832-2845 to secure your spot.

We need your help to make this event a success. You can carry out tables and chairs, help serve and clean refreshment tables, help clean-up and return tables inside at the end of the day, make a monetary donation to help defray costs, **SHOW YOUR SUPPORT** by donating perennials, renting a yard sale space, shopping at the yard sale, and joining us for a cookout and strawberry shortcake. Remember to invite lots of friends and family to join you!

TIDINGS is a monthly publication of
**First Congregational Church,
 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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May 2015						
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OR CURRENT RESIDENT