



September 2007

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Coffee Hour Hosts

- 8/19, 8/26 ~ Deacons
- 9/2 ~ Pat & Alyse Bukoski
- 9/9 ~ BOCE
- 9/16, 9/23 ~ Trustees
- 9/30, 10/7 ~ Historians & Memorial

**First Congregational
Church's
6th Annual
Golf Tournament**

**Sat., Sept. 15, 2007
at Pine Ridge
Country Club
12 p.m. Registration
1:00 p.m. Tee-Off**

**See enclosed insert
for more details!**

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!’”

Here we are approaching the end of Summer. Plans are underway for a very active program year. Plan to be involved as an individual and as families. The 2007 - 2008 program year should be exciting as we continue our commitment to New Orleans, as we plan for our Sanctuary redecoration, as we undertake another year of sharing our faith with our children through Church School, and engage our young people in mission and ministry through Youth on a Mission and Confirmation, as our music ministry enriches our worship and as we share our building with the community.

Your faith will grow in proportion to your committed participation in the community of faith—learning, growing, serving together in Christ’s Name. Consider yourself personally invited to be actively engaged with us. You are needed. You are wanted.

Programs and activities begin Sunday, September 9th. Come one, come all. We look forward to seeing you and sharing our faith together.

Sincerely,

Rev. Dr. Kenneth E. Knox
Pastor

*Sunday Morning
Worship Service
begins at 10:00 a.m.*

CONFIRMATION 2008

Confirmation will be offered beginning **Sunday, September 9th**, with a **Confirmand & Parents Meeting at 7:00 p.m.** in Fellowship Hall. Any young person of high school age is welcome. Classes will be on Tuesdays from 7-8:00 p.m. Classes will continue into the spring at which time the confirmand decides whether to become a church member or not.

Parent commitment and involvement is expected.

If you wish for your youth to participate, please contact the church office at 508-832-2845 to indicate your interest so we can order sufficient books.

INTERFAITH HOSPITALITY

The First Congregational Church has welcomed homeless families for over a dozen years. May Stone and Diane Moore served as the coordinators when my daughter and I first began to volunteer. From the first year serving as chaperones, it was readily apparent how important a program such as this was. The significance is so basic, the willingness to offer, if only for a short period of time, a safe environment for families in crisis.

When we discuss homelessness, we create an image of what a homeless situation is. But if we were to compare notes, these images would be so different. There are so many layers of complexities. The simplest approach is to commit to the families we house and try to minimize the trauma they face with the simplest acts of kindness.

As we reflect on past years, and as serious as these circumstances are, there has been joy in the generosity of providing what we can, poignant memories as well as a lot of laughter, particularly with the children.

For many years, Interfaith fell the first week in August. For years, it seemed our night to chaperon would often fall on my birthday. Therefore, there was always a surprise birthday party, much to the delight of the children. One little guy insisted on using one of our greyhounds as a sled dog. He hung on by the dog's tail. The problem was, he was covered in cake frosting. A tail covered with frosting slips and slides and that is precisely what this little one did as the dog raced around. Sadie also wasn't too excited about the mashed bananas he also tried to feed her. Initially we thought the child had learning disabilities. When testing was arranged, it was found he was severely hearing impaired, but yet, he was the happiest of toddlers.

Another year, we were awakened one night by a tap on the door. A little girl said she was hearing strange noises and absolutely knew the church was haunted. After we had taken her back to her parents with an assurance the church was not haunted, both greyhounds escaped and decided to use the downstairs hall as their race track. We were trying desperately to round them up without waking everyone up. But --- be assured their speed far exceeded ours even though we were in hot pursuit -- they assuredly won that race with no effort whatsoever.

Last year, it was hot and the twins were fussy. The mom didn't know giving them a bath would sooth them. They quickly fell into a peaceful sleep. How great it was to have a chaperon sharing her parenting skills with a mom who was totally overwhelmed with a set of eight month old twins and a toddler.

Perhaps the most poignant of stories is a little girl, about seven. She had a migraine. Can you imagine one so young with a migraine? We gave her cool cloths for her head and put her in a darkened room. She fell asleep. Fortunately she felt better when she woke. My daughter told her about my surprise birthday party. She was so excited. She told me she had brought a gift. Wrapped in a piece of a paper towel, I found a broken piece of rosary beads. This child had nothing, yet she wanted to share one of the few possessions she had. Needless to say, this was one of the nicest gifts I ever received.

Over the years the faces have blended as have many of the names, but through this congregation's generosity the Interfaith mission goes on. It serves as a beacon of safety and hope for countless families. We may focus on the principles of self help and family stability, but we also recognize the ecumenical collaboration so essential with volunteers from this Congregation, St. Josephs, North American Martyr's and Greenville Baptist Church as well as community volunteers collectively who come together to help.

Collectively, it is a win win combination – our families are grateful and in the words of one of our guests this year, this Church community has genuinely made everyone feel welcome -- and within this Church there is a lot of love.

Pat and Alyse Bukoski

Library Tidings by Gloria Whitehead

Remember how we intimated in the pre-summer *Tidings* that those months would be an ideal time to change your pace with some good reading? YOU DIDN'T? Neither did I. So let's try again. Fall is fast approaching, along with schedules and meetings. How about tapering off from full days with a good book (from the church library) so that you unwind with ease into sleep.

Now for the source of borrowing books, there are the school libraries, the excellent town library, the Worcester Public Library and the church libraries. With the other three, why bother with church libraries? For starters, you can sign out books at anytime church is open. Additionally:

- 1) The contents of the books from which you select, adults' and children's, are as appropriate on your coffee table as in God's house.
- 2) Among sixteen categories there are biographies, fiction, art, nature, and history, and also an extensive choice of inspirational topics, plus religious thoughts and beliefs, Jesus' life and teachings, Bible personalities, etc.
- 3) We're not a match for the best seller list, but there's a blend of highly-recommended, recent books along with older and timeless material.
- 4) Both libraries afford supplementary information to a program or curriculum used in church school, plus we're always willing to order anything that will be used by the church members as a whole.
- 5) To open little eyes and ears, nursery through teens, to a wealth of religious, and otherwise, beautiful books and DVD's. Also, we have a variety of books that deal with special issues, for example, divorce, AIDS, alcoholism, death, moving, single parenting, etc.
- 6) Many adult and children's books have been gifted by church members and friends who have, and continue to, support the libraries.
- 7) Electricity may fail, but somewhere there's a "candle" or daylight to illumine the dynamic, contrasting, serene thoughts that have been penned through the years—that reach out to you and make you realize that books are here to stay in spite of the incredible media/audio technology of today.

A side-light, during her stay with Interfaith here at the church, Annie was exceptionally happy to be able to borrow three books. She was also studying for her GED exam (and passed). She managed to read one book in one night. Another mom was delighted to find a book to read to her youngsters at bedtime.

We will occasionally be including a request and reminder for you to tell us of any books you feel are passé or inappropriate. Since the bookcases in the adult library will need to be moved during the sanctuary restoration, your help in this way will serve a double purpose.

Next month look for a listing of some new books.

YOM NEWS

Youth on a Mission will be sharing details of their trip to Kentucky in a presentation during the Sunday morning service on September 9th.

Also on September 9th, after the service, there will be a meeting of all **new and existing** YOM members. (All youth who will be at least 14 years old by 7/1/08 are eligible to join YOM.) This will be an informational meeting to discuss future fundraising and planning.

FOOD PANTRY TRIPS

The Friends of Auburn Senior Center is now funding a monthly trip to the North American Martyr's Food Pantry on the 3rd Saturday of each month. There is no charge for either the food or transportation, but reservations are a must. Please call (508) 832-7799 to be put on the van schedule.

SUNDAY SCHOOL NEWS



I Hope everyone has had a GREAT summer and is ready for another year at Sunday School!

I am still looking for teachers for this year. It is a two Sunday a month commitment - one week of lead teaching and one week of assistant teaching. The curriculum is great - each lesson is completely set up for the teacher, with detailed steps for each class. PLEASE consider teaching this year!

There will be a teachers' meeting on August 22nd at 7 p.m., for all new and existing teachers. I am hoping to be able to set up a schedule of teachers for our first session (September, October and November). If you are unable to attend, but would still like to teach, please contact me with your availability at (774) 272 - 0458 or leav831@msn.com. I am also looking for a volunteer (or two!) to lead our Cradle Roll room.

Rally Day for Sunday School will be on September 9th. Registration for the year will begin at 9:30 a.m., followed by activities for the children and an ice cream social.

Thanks,
Heather Zautner



FIRST DAY PROGRAM

Once again it is time to think of our First Day Program in Auburn. If you are not familiar with this, it is a drive to provide a new outfit and school supplies to those of our children who, without our assistance, would not have these things to start school with as other kids do.

If you would like to be a part of this worthwhile project you may purchase school supplies or simply make out a check to Auburn Youth and Family Services and send it directly to them at 21 Pheasant Court, Auburn, MA 01501, or you can give it to me and I will forward it.

If you have any questions see me after church or call 508-832-2308.

Thank you,
Avis Britton



Here We Grow Preschool

Is the summer of 2007 really almost over? *Here We Grow* Preschool is just about ready to begin its 19th year as an outreach program of the First Congregational Church of Auburn. As I write this article I am very proud to say at this time HWG is almost at full capacity with an enrollment of 124 children. We have only two spots available in the T-Th pm 3-year-old session. We have a wait list for all of the 4-year-old spots.

The *Here We Grow* staff for the school year of 2007-2008 is:

Room 1- Michelle Mulcahy & Helen Ethier

Room 2- Anne Coyne, Jean Marhefka & Robin Mancini

Room 3- Debra Nelson, Karen Banks & Sherri Leonard

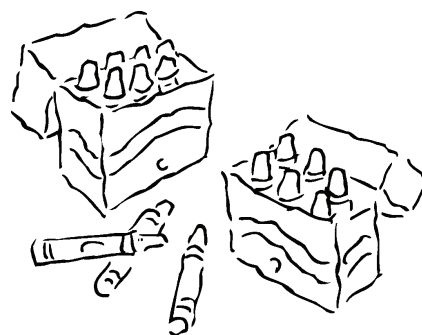
We have had many interested past and present parents and teachers who have been placed on our substitute list for the upcoming school year. I have received many calls from outside of the program from people interested in working at *Here We Grow*. We welcome them and all the parents who are interested in helping out at *Here We Grow*.

With the classrooms having been cleaned by Sally Gagnon, (a past and present parent) the staff will be setting up the rooms on August 27th, 28th and 29th. Teachers report to school on August 30th for their orientation and to finish last minute changes. The first day of "school" will be on Tuesday, September 4th for the T-Th am & pm classes and for the T-W-Th pm classes. The M-W-F am and extended day classes will begin on Wednesday, September 5th.

In closing, I am once again sending an open invitation to all church members and their families to stop in and see what *Here We Grow* does each day; I know it's something you would be proud of. Until next month, enjoy the rest of the summer.

Respectfully,

Dawn Murphy,
Director of *Here We Grow* Preschool



Outreach Committee News

Before adjourning for the summer, the Outreach Committee donated funds to the following worthy causes:

- The Marie Anne Center on Lincoln Street in Worcester. They offer an afternoon youth program called “Awesome August” for Junior High students. The program provides breakfast and lunch plus activities in art, music, sports and computers.
- A contribution was given to Pat Bukoski to use for Interfaith Hospitality to help individuals with specific needs.

Many thanks to Pat, Alyse, and all of the other volunteers for a wonderful job hosting the families!

Word has gotten out about our great system for sending books to New Orleans. Other churches have been giving us their books (along with shipping fees) to get the best shipping bargains. Once we educate our donors about our shipper's 50-lb per box weight limit, it will make things easier. It's exciting to see the books keep rolling in.

We look forward to more activity in the fall.

Thanks for your support,

The Outreach Committee:

Ellie Lowell, Cindy Dube, Gayle Farley, Alicia Schillinger, Ernie Smith and Sue Campbell



THE GREAT PUMPKIN

The Great Pumpkin (and a few of his friends) are coming to First Congregational Church! We are planning a fundraiser selling pumpkins on the church's front lawn. The “pumpkin patch” will be open every day Oct. 14th through Oct. 31st, 11:30 a.m. - dusk. While we have cashiers for the weekends, we are looking for volunteers to cover the weekday hours.

All proceeds go toward the Sanctuary Renovation.

If interested, please contact Diane Moore (508) 832-8078, Jennifer Bohn (508) 832-0428 or Shirley Hill (508) 832-6335.

(Look for additional information in next month's *Tidings* and upcoming bulletins.)



William E. Bjork

December 27, 1955 - July 6, 2007

Our thoughts and prayers are with the Bjork Family on the recent loss of William Bjork, who passed away on Friday, July 6th. He leaves his wife of 31 years, Susan, his two sons - Matthew Bjork and his wife Kristin of Rockland, Maine, and Carl "Michael" Bjork, of Auburn; his brothers - Carl O. "Nick" Bjork, of Worcester, and Robert E. Bjork, of Charlton; his sisters - Judith L. Bjork, of Auburn, and Jean Koleshis, of Ware. Other members of his family include several nieces and nephews. Bill was born in Worcester, the son of the late Carl O. and Mildred J. (Knowlton) Bjork. His funeral was held here, at First Congregational Church, on Tuesday, July 10th.

Helen A. (Allen) Prescott

Feb. 4, 1918 - Aug. 5, 2007

Please pray for the family and friends of Helen Prescott, who died peacefully at home on Sunday, August 5th. She leaves her husband of 67 years, Warren V. Prescott and her two daughters: Nan Johnson and her husband, Wilbur of Auburn, and Bette Clark and her husband, Robert of Lakewood, CA. She leaves 3 grandchildren and 2 great-grandchildren. Her funeral was held on Wednesday, August 8th, here at the church. Memorial Donations may be made to the Memorial Fund c/o the First Congregational Church, 128 Central Street, Auburn, MA 01501.

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

TO: All Committees
FROM: The Historians
RE: Transmission of Records

The transmission of records from all the various committees/organizations to the Historians should be done annually. This annual accountability by each group should summarize activities which took place during the previous year. Please be sure to organize paperwork in binders before dropping them off to the church historians.

Thank you.

To all my church family and friends,

I want to thank you for all your prayers, cards, visits, and especially to you, Ken, for your visits and prayers during my recovery. It helped keep my spirits up.

Bless all of you,

Sue Anderton

SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES



Happy Anniversary to
Lori & Nick Stockhaus.
They were wed on
September 14, 1991.



**HAPPY
ANNIVERSARY**



I hope everyone had a safe, healthy summer. September is a busy time of the year, as many activities resume. We must continue, or get back to, taking care of ourselves.

September is Childhood Cancer Month, Healthy Aging Month, Fruit and Vegetable Month, Leukemia and Lymphoma Awareness Month, National Cholesterol Education Month, Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month, and Prostate Cancer Awareness Month.

September 18th is Take a Loved One for a Check-up Day. September 21 is World Alzheimer's Day and September 26th is National Mesothelioma Awareness Day. I will have information about these topics on the Health Table.

I am requesting that anyone who is CPR certified sign the pad of paper that I will have on the Health Table. (It's good to know in case of an emergency.)

The first aid boxes will be restocked. They are located in the church office, the kitchen off Fellowship Hall, the choir robe room, and downstairs by the Children's Library.

I have information about the Worcester Regional Medical Reserve Corps. You don't have to be involved in medicine to volunteer. If interested, please take a brochure. These people responded recently when the town of Spencer had the problem with their water. We can have a representative come and speak, if we have some people interested.

The medical equipment closet has changed quite a bit, and I'm glad that people are using the equipment instead of buying it. As of August 2nd the closet was minimally stocked. There were several pairs of crutches, but I hope that we have no broken bones. I just want you to know that they're there if you need them.

God Bless!

Debbie Pranaitis, Parish Nurse

A Note from the Stewardship Committee:

The Stewardship Committee has chosen the theme “*Imagine*” the *Blessing of Forward Steps* as this year’s campaign for the gift of giving.

Imagine . . . Have you ever considered what a wonderful gift God has given us in the ability to *imagine*? It’s what dreams are made of.

In our youth, we *imagine* the places a bike will take us. As teens, we long for the car. As adults, we *imagine* our future in terms of home, family, career, and retirement. In short, our ability to *imagine* is the essence of growth. All that we do, every step we take, we first have to “*imagine*”.

Over the next few weeks, while relaxing on the deck or gardening in the yard, we encourage you to focus on prayer and the little steps you can take in daily living to build a closer relationship with God.

We also ask that you prayerfully consider a “step” in your yearly giving. Together, we can accomplish even more than we now *imagine*.

Please reflect on the following forward step suggestions from the Stewardship Committee, and as we go forward, let’s *imagine* together.

God Bless,

Donna & Todd Dube, Al Boucher, Mike Dube and Steve & Sandy Landry

Forward steps are small “everyday” steps we can take to enrich life and come closer to God. As Christians, we come to Christ, like children, with trusting hearts in the knowledge that spiritual growth comes one step at a time. We know we will not achieve perfection, but as believers we are committed to making the effort. The following “suggestions” are to help us to identify areas of personal and spiritual growth to work on. With just a little “practice” on each step we can make more progress than we can *imagine*. Soon we’ll come to know the joy and the blessings growth brings.

Forward Step Suggestions:

- 1) Put God First.
- 2) Together We Can Make A Difference.
Pray instead of worry. Talk to God about your problems throughout the day to keep the little things from becoming big issues.
- 3) Take time for daily devotions, reading and sincere “reflection.”
- 4) Volunteer and join in fellowship activities at church - you give each other strength.
- 5) Give time to your children, grandchildren, nephews, nieces, etc. Talk to them about God.
- 6) Encourage people every day, and build them up - family, co-workers, neighbors, and the clerk at the store.
- 7) Be optimistic. A negative attitude is self-defeating and pulls people down.
- 8) Delight in your work and give full effort. It will lead to new opportunities.
- 9) Think before you speak. Words count.
- 10) Listen, really listen.
- 11) Smile and laugh more. It gives you energy and is good for the soul.

And, ALWAYS REMEMBER TO PRAY.

Recent Baptisms

On June 10th we celebrated the baptisms of **Hunter Kevin** and **Chase Robert Davis**. Hunter and Chase are 8 months old. Their parents are Philip and Kirstin Davis. Also being baptized that day was **Matthew Terrence Gagnon**, son to Carolyn and Terrence Gagnon. Matthew is now 4 months old.

On June 17th we celebrated the baptism of **Mark Allen Perry III**. Mark is now 20 months old. His parents are Mark Perry and Caitlin Woodcock. Proud grandparents are Charles and Karen Woodcock, and great-grandparents are Don and Marion Woodcock.

On July 8th we celebrated the baptisms of **Madelyn Louise Stalker** and **Connor Paul Allain**. Madelyn is 4 months old. Her parents are Jessica and Todd Stalker. Grandparents are Eleanor and Peter Stalker, Jonathan and Deborah Mahler and William and Mary Brodeur. Also baptized July 8th was 6 month old Connor Paul Allain, son to Elizabeth Esposito and Jeffrey Allain. Connor's grandparents are Jane Standing and the late Paul Standing and Lenny and Barbara Allain.

On August 12th we celebrated the baptisms of **RoseMary Elaine Brown** and **Erik Robert Dupuis**. RoseMary is 13 months old. Her parents are Thomas and Mary Brown. Erik is the son of Christopher and Melissa Dupuis, and he is 14 months old.

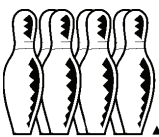
We would like to ask all friends and family members to continue to support these little ones in their spiritual journeys.

Congratulations to Valerie & Jerimy Moran on the birth of their son, **Devin William Moran**, born on July 3, 2007. The proud grandparents are Bob & Carol Luther.



Church Candlepin Bowling League

The Church Bowling League will be starting its 2007 - 2008 season on Friday, September 7th. We currently have openings for 3 full -time bowlers. Each team consists of 3 bowlers, and we begin bowling at 7:30 p.m. and finish by 9:15 p.m. **Any new bowlers that join the league will receive 40 free strings of bowling!** If you are interested, please contact Nick or Lori Stockhaus at 508 - 865-6439. Thank you!



Building Use Meeting Thursday, August 23 at 7 P.M.

The purpose of this meeting is so that groups who use our building may reserve future dates. Please be sure a representative from your group attends so that you can reserve space and be aware of any changes that may affect your group.

FROM THE CHOIR ROOM

Hello and welcome back! This summer I had the opportunity to attend a two day seminar hosted by Integrity Music. Integrity travels across the country hosting *Seminars 4 Worship* at predominantly contemporary churches. Their theme: *Journey to the Heart of Worship*. There was a tremendous variety of classes to choose from divided into four headings: *Creating the Worship Environment & Essential Resources*, *The Art of Music & Performance*, *Growing in Leadership Skills*, and *The Art of Worship Leading*. I primarily chose from the last two categories. Most people were of contemporary faith, which paradoxically, is quite strict and traditional. The Assembly of God church in Agawam hosted hundreds (it was packed all day in every class) of music ministers and musicians from Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island and New Jersey. It was an interesting learning experience from a personal perspective. I'd like to thank the Scholarship Committee for their generosity in sponsoring me.

This year we will be forming a new group called "Praise Choir." This will be something different for us as this simple music is usually done with guitar, microphones and/or keyboard. Drums and bass also are used in many churches. Do not be alarmed!! This is something we will do once a month during communion as an addition to our music ministry. For our purposes, we will use meditative songs with 2 or 3 singers, piano and/or guitar. Praise music is very simple, and easy to learn; the intention being that EVERYONE (not just the choir) joins in and sings along with the "band". At some point we will introduce the more up-tempo, praise music. This is a wonderful opportunity for anyone who wants to try singing occasionally, but does not have time to commit to regular choir rehearsals. This will be a REVOLVING group that sings 2 simple pieces once a month at communion. Rehearsals will be the week prior to communion Sunday, and will consist of 1 or 2 short run-throughs on Tuesday at 6:15 p.m. and/or Sunday at 9:15 a.m. These rehearsal times will be FLEXIBLE, dependent on people's schedules. For example, you could volunteer to sing for communion Sunday in January, rehearse once for a half-hour, and be done for the rest of the year if you so choose! Anyone from the congregation (and choir) is welcome to sing. I will start things out on September 2nd, and 1 or 2 choir members will join me on October 7th. Please don't hesitate to speak to me if you are interested. "Praise Choir" will be very informal, flexible, and accessible.

On other fronts:



- First Church Choir will resume rehearsals on September 4th at 6:30 until 8:00 p.m. in the choir room. ALL are welcome!

- Joyful Noyse will begin rehearsals on September 9th at 11:15 a.m. in the Sanctuary.

We are purchasing several new microphones to use with Joyful Noyse and the "Praise Choir". Also, the choir will be holding another bake sale fundraiser with proceeds going toward our goal of making a CD. (The date of the bake sale to be announced.)

I'm looking forward to an exciting year in our music ministry as God's vision for us unfolds.

Blessings,
Heather Moore, Minister of Music

"Thanks be to God: it is God who makes our music have the power of prophecy; God uses our music as revelation; God who gives music the power to move and change; God who makes musical offerings sacred. Therefore, seek God's word, love, and power in all that you sing."

Taken from *Your Ministry of Singing in the Church Choir*.



**Heifer International's
Overlook Farm**

216 Wachusett St.,
Rutland, MA
Phone: (508) 886-2221

2007 Harvest Festival

**September 29th 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. and
September 30th noon to 4 p.m.**

Enjoy a hayride to the pumpkin patch to pick your own pumpkins. Great foods will be available including harvest corn chowder, harvest stew and pesto pizza. Visit our gift shop featuring fair trade crafts from around the world.

Activities for the children include: face painting, hay maze and crafts.

(No admission fee; \$5 parking fee per vehicle.)



*TIDINGS is a monthly
publication of*

**First Congregational
Church
128 Central St.
Auburn MA 01501**

Phone: (508)832-2845

Web: auburnfirstucc.org



BULK RATE
U.S. POSTAGE
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Auburn, Mass

September 2007						
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