



2008

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!’”

From the Pastor

To each and every member of First Congregational Church I offer my appreciation that you have allowed me to share your lives as your pastor. I am proud of many of the ministries and missions we have undertaken. I am humbled by the tasks we did not accomplish together. We minister in very difficult times in which the church is a low priority in our society. But the importance of our calling is in no way diminished. We have a two hundred and thirty two (232) year tradition of ministry, in and to, this community to continue. Together we have served 1/10 of that tradition and now it is your calling to go on.

I thank all the church leaders who faithfully, and joyfully, and creatively carried out their responsibilities. A Congregational Church depends on just such leaders to be vital and effective. I thank the loyal members whose presence was dependable at worship and at other church activities. Your presence is a great and supportive gift. I thank those who took the education and inclusion of children seriously and committed time and energy to these varied programs. I thank those whose financial support was steady and committed seeking to stall off the fiscal dehydration and starvation we mainline Protestant churches face. I thank the staff who has served this church so well and supported each other in the common ministry. I thank a community that has kept this church in mind and observed us with keen interest and shared in portions of our life. I thank all those leaders and members whom we have loved and lost. You bequeathed a great heritage and wonderful facilities to us.

I thank my wife, Jackie, and my family for their sacrifices, support, and participation.

To you all, I pray God’s richest blessings and an active and fruitful future.



In Christ,

Ken Knox

Rev. Dr. Kenneth E. Knox
Pastor

Happy Birthday to:Haydn McPherson - April 20th

Bob MacLeod will be celebrating his 90th birthday on April 27th. Happy Birthday, Bob!

**Happy Anniversary to:**

Ben & Avis Britton
April 27th

Rev. Knox's retirement in April is fast approaching. His last day will be April 30th. We will be honoring Pastor Ken and Jackie on Sunday, April 13th, with a retirement celebration beginning at 2:00 p.m. in the Church Sanctuary followed by a reception in Fellowship Hall. Please plan to join us as we reflect on 23 years of faithful service to our church and community.



If you would like to bless Ken and Jackie with a monetary gift, you can make a check out to the church and mail it to: Lori Stockhaus
36 Linda Avenue
Millbury, MA 01527

Help Wanted

Grandmother looking for experienced, responsible person to help with housecleaning duties. Home is located in Auburn. Offering a flexible schedule, and pay is negotiable. For details please call Jane at 508-832-5853.



Our next church supper is planned for Saturday, April 19th, at 5:00 p.m.

Adults \$8 Children \$4

Servers: Prudential & Scholarship

Hope to see you there!

Calling All Confirmands

We would like to recognize all confirmands who were confirmed by Rev. Knox (1985 -2008) at the 10:00 a.m. Service of Confirmation on Sunday, April 13th. All confirmands are invited to be present and participate. Family members and friends, please pass this information on. (Ages would be approximately 15 years old to 38 years old.)

Children's Story Time

Saturday mornings 10-11:15 a.m.
at Pakachoag Church,
203 Pakachoag Street, Auburn

story time will include crafts and a light snack
(this activity is free and is geared toward ages 2-6)

For more info, please call their church office at 508-755-8718.

The Board of Christian Education has been working on hiring a new Director of Education. We have created a new job description and will soon be interviewing applicants. Our goal is to have a director on board before the end of the Sunday School year. By having a new director then, it will allow us to have everything ready for the fall.

Children’s Sunday will be on June 1st during our worship service. Please do not stay home if you don’t have any children or grandchildren in the program; they are the future of our church.

We must all keep in mind, when a child is baptized here we promise to support and help to educate that child. Won’t you think about doing your part and share your knowledge with our kids?

The Board of Christian Education: Paula Almstrom, Bruce Fant, Shirley Hill, Ellie Lowell, Sandi Rhodes, Stephanie Rice, Mike Schillinger, Chairman, Leslie Wilson, and Heather Zautner

**American Red Cross
Blood Drive**

Monday, April 7th
3:00 - 8:00 pm

Auburn Senior Center
4 Goddard Drive
(off of Pakachoag Street)

Sponsored by Auburn Rotary

Coffee Hour Hosts

- 4/6 ~ Pranaitis/Hardy Families
- 4/13 ~ Trustees
- 4/20 ~ Music
- 4/27, 5/4 ~ Personnel Relations
- 5/11 ~ Prudential
- 5/18, 5/25 ~ Library
- 6/1 ~ BOCE

Arthur Bates Kemp



Arthur Bates Kemp, former Town Treasurer of Auburn, long -time public servant, co -owner of Marsh-Kemp Insurance Company in Worcester, and beloved husband and father, died peacefully in Concord, New Hampshire, on March 11, 2008. He was 87 years old.

He is survived by his wife, Leila May (Lord) and two sons, Edward and Bruce. A memorial service was held at Havenwood Heritage Heights Chapel in Concord, NH on Saturday, March 15th. Contributions in Arthur Kemp’s name may be sent to the First Congregational Church, 128 Central Street, Auburn, MA 01501.

Our thoughts and prayers go out to Arthur’s family.

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



Happy Spring! April is Alcohol Awareness Month, Counseling Awareness Month, National Autism Awareness Month, Cancer Control Month, Irritable Bowel Syndrome Month, National Donate Life Month, National Sarcoidosis Awareness Month, Sports Eye Safety Month, and Women's Eye Health and Safety Month.

April 7-13 is National Public Health Week, the 19th through 26th is National Infant Immunization Week, and April 26 through May 4th is National Safe Kids Week.

The week of April vacation, I'm sponsoring another babysitting class. This time it will be Wednesday, April 23 through Thursday, April 24th. You can call Pam (Daigneault) Sheeran at Memorial Hospital to register. The class is from 10:00 a.m. until 2:30 p.m. with 1/2 hour for lunch. Pam's number is 508-334-5474. We have just had a woman call the church looking for a babysitter. Because of the classes, I have been able to get her a babysitter. This woman is new to town and was happy to hear about the certified babysitters.

Please remember that if you are hospitalized, we sometimes miss it because of HIPPA! Please call the church office and let us know.

I'm also happy to open the closet door inside the education wing and see it changes almost on a daily basis. I'm glad that the equipment is being used and circulated. Help yourself!

God Bless!
Deborah Pranaitis
Parish Nurse

CHURCH CAMPING WEEKEND

This year's Camping Weekend will be June 27th & 28th. Once again, we will be returning to Oak Haven Family Campground in Wales, MA. If you would like to spend a weekend relaxing and having fun with members and friends from First Congregational Church, please contact Lori Stockhaus at 508-865-6439 and let her know you may be interested.

Italian Pasta Buffet

Saturday, April 12, 2008
5:00 - 6:30 p.m.

First Congregational Church of Oxford
355 Main Street (Route 12)

Menu includes: spaghetti, ziti, lasagna,
sausage, meatballs, tossed salad,
black forest cake and more!

Adults: \$8 Children 5 -10: \$5
Children under 5: Free



Here We Grow Preschool

Helloooooo Spring! I am thrilled that spring has finally arrived.

The month of March was a very busy one at *Here We Grow* Preschool. Parents had the opportunity to spend time in the classrooms since it was Parent Volunteer Month. The parents could spend the day and be a helper, or a very few moms and dads were brave enough to do a science experiment and then some stayed to read a story at the end of the day. Once again one of our dads came dressed in his kilt and played the bagpipes for the children. Yes, they were just as loud this year as last year. The staff and children enjoyed having all the parents in to help out.

Neal Primeaux spent two days with us taking pictures of the children and their classmates. Once again, thank you to the Board of Christian Ed. for allowing us the use of a Sunday school room for the individual pictures.

Our third, and final, fundraiser was run the month of February. The families of *Here We Grow* sold close to \$8,500 in Yankee Candle items which then gave us a profit of \$3,500. This money is used for the fieldtrips taken during the school year.

Here We Grow was on break during Holy Week in March and then again four weeks later we will be on spring vacation. Here's hoping for pleasant weather for that week. We had Easter parties on March 13th and 14th with the help of a visit from the Easter Bunny.

As of the middle of March, *Here We Grow*'s four year old classes have 2 spots left to fill with 3 visits of 4-year-olds coming up. All 3 year-old spots are filled, with a large wait list for the school year of 2008-2009. I am proud that HWG is so well known, being filled at this time and remember, we have added a 4th classroom. WOW!

Here We Grow will be running a summer program the last two weeks of June. If you know of anyone who has children ages 4-9 and they would like to send them to our summer program, have them give the school a call for more information.

Until next month, stay well and enjoying the beautiful weather.

Dawn Murphy

Director

Here We Grow Preschool

Library Tidings

The sun is bright, the temperature is in the low 40's and it's the first day of Spring. It's also Good Friday, and Easter is coming Sunday. It's the earliest Easter has been celebrated since 1913 and word has it that 100 years—at least—will pass before it happens so early again; a unique feature.

If you're looking for a popular and easy - to - read series of three books consider Beverly Lewis' #1 *The Shunning*, #2 *The Confession* and #3 *The Reckoning*. Centering on the life of a Pennsylvania Amish family, volume 1 reveals their simple and tranquil lifestyle which is shaken when, in a dusty old attic trunk, a beautiful satin infant gown is discovered. Volume 2 takes Katie on a search beyond secure environs to find the origin of the treasured tiny dress, and with volume 3 opens the episodes and confusion of lifestyles which lead to a powerful conclusion.

RE: THE MOVE!

Two months is about what we have to plan and execute vacating all of the books, bookcases, stand and table from the library in the Sanctuary. Our first concern is our readers and potential readers as this notice has to "go to press" tomorrow, finer details will be available soon.

Meanwhile:

- # 1 Individuals may borrow up to 15 books for the summer or until the library re-opens.
- #2 Books will be removed from the Sanctuary beginning on Saturday, June 7th.
- #3 Start to make a list for yourself by author and title of the books you would like.
- #4 We'll have a marker that you can place in a book with your name until pick up time.
- #5 The process will be kept simple.

As signs of spring begin to burst through the soil and leaf buds appear on trees, it's an inviting time to read W. Phillip Keller's *A Shepherd Looks at Psalm 23*. Thirty-eight years and almost 2 million copies later this former shepherd continues to inspire readers with his insights into the characteristics and life of sheep. His message beautifully expresses how those who trust Christ, his guidance, and look to him as their provider can sense his love. This work of Keller is recognized as a Zondervan Classic—the finest of Christian literature chosen for its beauty, ageless insight and power to inspire and refresh the heart.

There are 2 copies of *A Shepherd Looks at Psalm 23* currently on display. As our shepherd looks to a change in his life, we also can look to reading this book now and in the future and reflect on the many ways that our shepherd, Kenneth Knox, has led us by the still waters, restored our souls and on and on. With the words of the Psalm we thank him for his encouragement and support through 23 years and pray that he will continue to walk in the paths of righteousness, et al. in good health while serving as the same mentor/shepherd for the varied flock, whenever, wherever they may find him.

The Library Committee

SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATIONS

Applications are available in Fellowship Hall, and in the church office for anyone interested in applying for a scholarship.

Applications are due by April 15th.

Congratulations to Scott and Nicole Johnson on the recent birth of their son, Brady Warren Johnson born on March 16th, 2008. At birth, Brady weighed 8 lbs, 12 oz. His proud grandparents are Wil and Nan Johnson.



Newborns

YOUTH ON A MISSION and CONFIRMATION CLASS NEWS

YOM: I hope everyone has marked their calendars and plans to attend our annual LIVE auction on Sunday, April 6th. A lunch of pasta and meatballs will be served at 1:00pm (\$8 for adults, \$4 for children) and the bidding begins promptly at 2:00. We have the same professional auctioneer we have every year, Mr. Tate Conkey, who always makes the bidding fun and enjoyable. We have great items as always: Sharks, Tornadoes, Red Sox and Patriots tickets, some furniture items, several pieces of framed artwork, a handmade wooden cradle as well as vacation time at Sunday River and Pine Point, Maine. There is something for everyone in a variety of price ranges. YOM NEEDS everyone's help and we hope to see you there.

YOM also has some other fun things coming up in the not too distant future - bowling, a car wash and a pool party when the weather is warmer.

CONFIRMATION CLASS: Confirmation is coming a little early this year so that our last class can be confirmed by Ken before his retirement. The confirmands met with the Board of Deacons on March 25th to read their statements of faith. They will participate in a program put on by the Worcester Area Mission Society called Urban Immersion at the beginning of April. Confirmation will be held during the service on Sunday April 13th.

It has been a pleasure to be a confirmation teacher for these past 10 years and I am hoping that someone in the congregation is considering stepping up to the plate and being a confirmation teacher next fall.

God bless,
Jennifer Bohn



Remember Our Troops

We have decided to send packages to Iraq at the beginning of every month. So please continue to collect items. Suggestions include dried soup and veggies (no cans), microwaveable items in plastic containers, candy, cookies (not homemade as it takes a few weeks to get there) easy mac 'n cheese, pudding cups that don't need refrigeration, etc.

If you'd like to help, please see Diane Moore or Avis Britton for more information, and thank you for supporting our troops.

Managing through Change.... MISSION: POSSIBLE

This is our stewardship theme for 2008. Throughout the coming year, as we undergo the many changes within First Congregational Church of Auburn - our Leadership, the physical changes of our building and also spiritually within ourselves - we have to know that with God all things are possible. We will rise victorious through the many challenges in the months ahead.

First and foremost, our biggest challenge this year will be finding a Pastor to replace Rev. Knox. Rev. Knox has been one of the biggest supporters of the various Stewardship campaigns over the years and it would not be fitting to let him leave without sending out a big THANK YOU from the present, as well as past, Stewardship Committee. Rev Knox would listen to our campaign strategies and then share his thoughts and ideas so we could add his to ours and together as a team we could be effective.

And we were effective.....

I say that because Ron Klaucke and I had the good fortune of attending a Stewardship event on a recent Saturday morning at the First Congregational Church in Shrewsbury. There, while in discussion with other Congregationalists, we learned, to my amazement, that it seemed we were doing things "better" than some of the other churches. Many other churches are in a state of flux and having a difficult time getting back on track, whether it is with membership, financial, in their pastoral searches or even, on a spiritual track. Although our Church has its own challenges, even without the larger ones we face in the upcoming year, we just seemed to be doing "better" than some of those whose Stewardship teams we met that rainy morning. In comparison, one church had a deficit of \$78,000 and had to conduct a mid-year pledge campaign!! Another church, with declining membership is having difficulties just...bringing it all back together. They all wanted to know how WE were managing. That was not what I anticipated when I went to this Stewardship session. I wanted to learn more about how we could help our Church and it turned out we were giving - more than receiving - advice.

We, at First Congregational Church of Auburn, have many challenges to work through this coming year...yet....as we manage through all this change.....it is definitely MISSION: POSSIBLE. Knowing the "team" we have within our Congregation and their dedication to our Church through their Prayer, Time, Talents and Treasures, I truly believe that all things are possible. We still need to work at them....by no means can we become complacent since we seem to be doing "better" than some of those around us....but I believe we have what we need to be successful in doing God's Will.

Thank you, Ken, for your inspiration and commitment. May the journey ahead be a blessed one for you and Jackie.

Please keep this prayer in your hearts and minds through the upcoming months:

Loving Creator, the challenges before us seem enormous as we strive to serve you. Help us to remember that we can courageously meet every test through Christ our Lord. Amen.

In His Love,
Michele Schillinger
Chairman of the Stewardship Committee



Choir News

All former choir members are invited to join the choir in honoring Rev. Knox on April 27th. We will be singing one anthem with a rehearsal the preceding Tuesday (April 22nd) at 6 p.m.

We've made mention in past *Tidings* of the choir's goal to make a CD. Fundraising through yard sales, selling tee shirts, bake sales and anthem tributes has finally paid off! The Choir will be making a recording in the Sanctuary on May 17th at 11 a.m. Look for more information to come!

JOYFUL NOYSE REHEARSAL SCHEDULE:

March 30	11:15 a.m.
April 6, 13 & 20	11:15 a.m.
April 27	9:15 a.m. <i>Daniel and the Lion</i>
May 4, 11, 18 & 25	11:15 a.m.
June 1	9:15 a.m. Joyful Noyse Recognition (anthem to be announced)



We want to thank Ron and Connie Hanks for organizing the Easter flower orders. This is no small task as they coordinate the details with the florist, prepare spreadsheets for the dedications, 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!



Out of the mouth of babes . . .

Lot's Wife

The Sunday School teacher was describing how Lot's wife looked back and turned into a pillar of salt, when little Jason interrupted, "My mommy looked back once while she was driving," he announced triumphantly, "and she turned into a telephone pole!"

Good Samaritan

A Sunday School Teacher was telling her class the story of the Good Samaritan. She asked the class, "If you saw a person lying on the roadside, all wounded and bleeding, what would you do?" A thoughtful little girl broke the hushed silence, "I think I'd throw up."

Did Noah Fish?

A Sunday School teacher asked, "Johnny, do you think Noah did a lot of fishing when he was on the ark?" "No", replied Johnny. "How could he, with just two worms."

Higher Power

A Sunday School Teacher said to her children, "We have been learning how powerful kings and queens were in Bible times. But, there is a higher Power. Can anybody tell me what it is?" One child blurted out, "Aces!"

The Lord Is My Shepherd

A Sunday School Teacher decided to have her young class memorize one of the most quoted passages in the Bible - Psalm 23. She gave the youngsters a month to learn the chapter. Little Ricky was excited about the task—but he just couldn't remember the Psalm. After much practice, he could barely get past the first line. On the day that the kids were scheduled to recite Psalm 23 in front of the congregation, Ricky was so nervous. When it was his turn, he stepped up to the microphone and said proudly, "The Lord is my Shepherd, and that's all I need to know."

Time to Pray

A pastor asked a little boy if he said his prayers every night.

"Yes, sir," the boy replied.

"And, do you always say them in the morning, too?" the pastor asked.

"No sir," the boy replied. "I ain't scared in the daytime."

Say a Prayer

Little Johnny and his family were having Sunday dinner at his Grandmother's house. Everyone was seated around the table as the food was being served. When Little Johnny received his plate, he started eating right away.

"Johnny! Please wait until we say our prayer," said his mother.

"I don't need to," the boy replied.

"Of course, you do," his mother insisted. "We always say a prayer before eating at our house."

"That's at our house," Johnny explained. "But this is Grandma's house and she knows how to cook!"

(Thanks to George DuHamel for sending these jokes along to us.)

Come to the First Congregational
Church in Auburn for the . . .

LIVE AUCTION



SUNDAY, APRIL 6, 2008

PROCEEDS TO BENEFIT YOUTH ON A MISSION'S TRIP TO
ASHVILLE, NC TO SERVICE THOSE IN NEED

1:00 PM



PASTA AND MEATBALL LUNCHEON

\$8.00 ADULTS \$4.00 CHILDREN (under 12)

2:00 BIDDING BEGINS

MC/Visa Accepted

Bring friends, family, neighbors!

ALL ARE WELCOME!!!

News from Outreach

The Outreach Committee is continuing to collect donations in our ark banks. Our purpose is to help raise money to buy chicks and bunnies as part of a project through Heifer International. Our overall goal is to build an ark with a pair of several different kinds of animals. The chicks and bunnies are the first of these purchases over the next few years. The chicks, after six months, can lay up to 200 eggs a year. The extra eggs can be sold to pay for school, clothes and medicine. Rabbits have as many as 40 offspring in a year. They provide families with a steady source of protein and income. Rabbit manure can be applied to the gardens to make them produce more crops or vegetables.

We originally asked for all banks to be returned by Easter; however, we are extending the deadline and encourage you to bring the ark banks in as soon as possible.



Thank you.
Debbie Pranaitis
Outreach Chairman

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
PAID
Non-Profit Org.
Permit No. 6
Auburn, Mass

April 2008

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