

FIRST
CONGREGATIONAL
CHURCH



Next Church Supper
is
April 22, 5 PM
Roast Beef

*The first screw to
get loose in your
head is often the
one that holds your
tongue in place.*

~author unknown



Coffee Hour Hosts

April 2 & 9 ~ Trustees

**April 16 ~ Easter
(no coffee hour)**

April 23 ~ Music

April 30 & May 8 ~

Personnel Relations

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!’”

Why does our church struggle with a deficit, without sufficient leadership to carry out the ministries to which we believe God calls us, with a depressing sense that our church is not all that it could be or become, with a concern over the closing of our sister churches. Why indeed? We are a church of 548 members, people who have publicly committed themselves to walk the walk of Christian faith with their brothers and sisters in faith. Each has owned the church covenant which promises to God and their fellow church members that we “consecrate ourselves, our time, our talents and our treasure to the strengthening of the cause of Christ around us”.

Joining the church changes everything - as a non-member the church serves you and tries to draw you closer to Christ. As a member you become the servant and disciple seeking to help and serve others. Membership is not a social notch on your belt but commissioning as a soldier and servant of God, ready to do whatever needs to be done for the Kingdom of God.

The nominating committee received many more “No’s” than “Yeses”. The Stewardship Committee contacted 312 families seeking support for the church and eventually received 161 responses.

We do not have to worry about the devil doing us in, or secular forces attacking us. Our problem is within ourselves. We are not what we promised God we would become. We are not supporting each other on the journey of faith. We are not always there for each other and for the church when we are needed. We want to see you. We would like this to be a very special Easter for everyone. We invite everyone to come home to the church for Easter.

Rev. Dr. Kenneth E Knox
Pastor

CERTIFIED BABYSITTING COURSE in April is already full!



Congratulations to Donald & Carolyn Slongwhite who celebrated their 62nd wedding anniversary on February 27.

They were married in 1944.



Our sympathies to the family of John “Jack” Black who died at the age of 102. He would have been 103 in April. He was a member of the church but had not been for a few years as he was in a nursing home. At one time, we understand, he was Treasurer of the church. Please keep the family and friends in your prayers.

To the family and friends of Dennis E. Gonyea who passed away on March 11th, 2006 after a brief illness. He leaves his wife of 65 years, Helen Gonyea.

Also to the Knox family on the passing of Mary Kay’s mother, Mrs. Jean Karp. Mary Kay is married to Stephen Knox, Ken and Jackie’s son. Jean passed away on March 15. Please keep the family in your prayers.

Our sympathies to Wil and Nan Johnson on the loss of their nephew, Eric Hultgren, who died on March 8 at the young age of 36. Eric also had two nieces in the Here We Grow Preschool.

Also to John and Carol Rockwood on the loss of his father, Wendell Rockwood on February 21

New Members

We would like to welcome Marilyn Plue and Christian Anderson as our two newest church members. They both joined our church on February 27, 2006 and were welcomed in front of the church on March 12, 2006.

New Arrivals

The rose on the altar is in celebration of the birth of baby girl Annmarie Kane, born on February 5, 2006 to Kristen (Millar) and Joe Kane. Happy grandparents are Carol and John Millar.

The **rose on the altar** is in celebration of the birth of Lauren Alexandra Prouty born to Mary Ann and Eric Prouty. Proud grandparents are Wayne and Joyce Prouty. We offer our congratulations to the happy family.

Four Baptisms in March

We celebrated the baptism of **Jarrett Towne**, son of Christopher and Jodi Towne, and grandson to John and Sally Watson. Standing up with them were Matthew Watson and Rebecca Towne.

We celebrated the baptism of **Evan Facticeau**, son of Robert and Karen Facticeau, and grandson to Robert and Donna Pierce. Standing up with them were Janice Joy and Gregory Facticeau.

We celebrated the baptism of **Emma Murphy Rannikko and Casey Lynn Rannikko**, daughters of James and Kelley Rannikko, and granddaughters of Marjorie Rannikko. May you continue to support them in their spiritual journeys through out their lives.

Happy Birthday

Barbara Niles turned 82 on March 20th. Happy Birthday Barbara!



Celebration

On March 5, 2006 we celebrated the 60th anniversary of the Service of Ordination of Robert Jeffrey MacLeod. He was ordained on March 8, 1946 at the First Congregational Church Boylston MA. Participating in this celebration with Dr. Knox were the honoree and son Dr. Bruce MacLeod, Interim Pastor First Congregational Church Milford MA. Members of Bob's family were Nancy, son David and grandson Adam from MD and daughter Judith Froman and son-in-law Scott Froman and Rhiannon and Michael from Sagamore Beach. Friend Beverly McGrath from Worcester also attended.

Youth on a Mission

By the time this goes out we will have had our Third Annual Live Auction and I'm hoping I'll be reporting a huge success.

We are already working on our Easter Candy fundraiser. We will be taking orders and offering free samples during coffee hour on March 26th and April 2nd. This year we're combing the distribution of the candy with a spring COOKIE Walk on April 9th. We'll have festive containers for sale to fill. We are gratefully accepting any donations of homemade cookies for that day. If you would like to donate, please see Jen & Randy Bohn or any YM member.

Most of the proceeds from our fundraisers go to covering costs for our summer mission trip. This year we will be going to Huntersville, WV. The week of July 22nd – July 30th. Part of the trip will involve work and visitation at the Greenbriar Birthing Center. This is a birthing center that accommodates pregnant woman in the federal prison system. I will try to keep everyone updated as to what our work will actually be. We have already rented a twelve passenger van and we will be taking our pick-up truck this year as well to carry supplies.

Youth on a Mission REALLY appreciates all the support we have received from our church.

****Special note:** This year we will again be participating in the 24hour famine that we did last year at the Sutton Church. The date has been set for Friday April 28th – 29th. It is an overnight event. There will be several activities scheduled for Friday evening, fun activities with a serious message about world hunger. On Saturday the 29th we will be participating in the spring WAYS work camps. We'll be working on community gardens in the Worcester area. **This activity is open to anyone 6th grade and up.** Details and permission slips will be distributed shortly. Please see me if you have any questions.

God Bless
Jen & Randy Bohn



Stewardship



Our theme for 2006 is Stewardship: It's Heart Work.

The April Stewardship shares with us a brief article about Manute Bol, the 7'7" basketball player from Sudan. Prior to a terrible car accident, which ended his professional basketball career, Manute would send the majority of his salary to those in his homeland who were suffering due to civil unrest. Many of his fellow countrymen were left homeless and the children orphans. A sports writer once asked Manute why he sent so much money home to which he replied, "God guided me to America and gave me a good job. But he also gave me a heart so I would look back."

This statement prompts questions we should all be asking ourselves just as it did the writer of this article. What about my heart? Is it uncaring and selfish? Is it turned inward toward self-satisfaction? Or is my heart opened outward in love and caring for others?

We seldom see the lives we touch with our gifts of love. That is what makes stewardship such a loving Christian act. Its "heart work" of the highest kind. Put your heart to work. When you do, you will become connected not only to humanity but also to God himself.

Our Committee hopes that each of you finds *Stewardship* a valuable addition to the monthly Tidings mailing. We welcome any comments and/or thoughts you might have regarding this publication or about Stewardship in general. Please feel free to speak with any one of us or send your comments via email to Stewardship@AuburnFirstUCC.org. We look forward to hearing from you.

In His Love,

The Stewardship Committee

John Rockwood (Chair), Michael & Michele Schillinger, Al Boucher, Todd & Donna Dube

Fire at Overlook Farm

As many of you may have heard, the Overlook Farm (Heifer Project International in Rutland) had a fire that damaged the barn and killed some baby goats and chickens. The area of the barn that was destroyed also housed the power tools. The full article is on the bulletin board and a few are available on the table in Fellowship Hall. If you would like to make a donation to help repair the barn and replace the power tools as well as help with the injured animal expenses, please make a check out to First Congregational Church with the memo "Overlook Capital Campaign". Our Outreach Committee has agreed to MATCH your donations thru Easter. For more information, please contact the church office, an Outreach Committee member or Rev. Knox. Thank you for your support of this worthwhile outreach program.

Joyful Noyse Schedule

March

12th ~ 11 am with **Snare Drum**

19th ~ 11 am with **Guitar**

26th ~ 9:15 am

'Ask and Seek and Knock'

April

2nd ~ 11 am drum, guitar only

11:15 both choirs and instruments **dress rehearsal** for Easter

9th ~ 11 am guitar and both choirs

16th ~ 9 and 10:30 am services

(rehearsal time 8:30 am)

'Lord I Lift Your Name on High'

23rd, 30th ~ 11 am

May

7th ~ 11 am

14th ~ 9:30 am Joyful Noyse Recognition

21st ~ no rehearsal

28th ~ no rehearsal

From the Choir Room:

On Palm Sunday the choir will present a new anthem 'We will be a Shelter for Each other.' This was written after Hurricane Ivan destroyed thousands of homes in Pensacola, Florida in September 2004, and is dedicated to all victims of natural disasters throughout the world. This four part anthem builds beautifully; it begins with soloists, moves to a dialogue with two vocal parts then doubles sopranos with tenors and altos with basses in the bridge section. The ending culminates in a key change and is sung in four parts. It's a bit challenging vocally as it jumps around quite a bit within an octave range. The chorus states the message "Love can build a house that stands forever."

This year's Easter anthems feature a bonanza of guest musicians. Both choirs will combine to sing 'Lord, I Lift Your Name on High', a popular contemporary Christian anthem often heard on Christian radio. Guest musicians for this piece will be Michael Schillinger on guitar, and Eric Pranaitis on snare drum.

I am also very pleased to present a trumpet soloist this Easter! Rolph Holly is a graduate of the Julliard School. He is from East Longmeadow and currently works in business (in Worcester) while playing at night. He will be playing a trumpet solo as well as hymns and a choral anthem 'Christ is Risen, Alleluia!'

This anthem is by Jay Althouse (my favorite composer!) and Sally Albrecht (his wife). (Two new anthems we've done this spring 'We are One with you, O Lord; and 'And He Died' are also by Jay Althouse).

'Christ is Risen' is a bright, rhythmical and spirited anthem written for five voice parts plus brass. The one basic homiletical theme; spreading the good news; Jesus Christ is risen from the grave!

Blessings,
Heather Moore
Minister of Music

'What lies before you and what lies behind you is of little matter to what lies within you'
~ Ralph Waldo Emerson



Joyful Noyse Choir Member of the Month:

SYMANTHA BROTHERS



Shantelle Anderson - soprano

Will Johnson - bass

Symantha is 8 years old and is in the second grade at Mary D. Stone School. She has been singing with Joyful Noyse for 3 years. In addition to singing in church, Symantha participated in a musical at her school to decrease violence as part of a group called Early Act. She also likes music class and performs in school concerts. Symantha has this to say about singing: "I like to learn new songs, be with my friends and sing with my Aunties. I like to make people feel happy when I sing and see them smile." and "Music makes me feel happy and joyful. I like the rhythm of music"
Thanks Symantha!

"Eluding God"

In 1981, a Minnesota radio station reported a story about a stolen car in California. Police were staging an intense search for the vehicle and the driver, even to the point of placing announcements on local radio stations to contact the thief. On the front seat of the stolen car sat a box of crackers that, unknown to the thief, were laced with poison. The car owner had intended to use the crackers as rat bait.

The police and the owner of the VW Bug were more interested in apprehending the thief to save his life than to recover the car. So often when we run from God, we feel it is to escape his punishment. But what we are actually doing is eluding his rescue.

Interfaith Hospitality Network

Our church community will once again collaboratively work with Interfaith Hospitality Network hosting homeless families for one week in August.

A volunteers start-up meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, April 25 at 7 PM in the Fellowship Hall.

Volunteers are needed for the preparation of one evening meal, overnights at the church, donations of groceries (i.e. a list will be posted) cuddly toys and/or a small cash donation to help defray overall miscellaneous costs.

Homelessness creates such trauma within a family. The network of churches involved in this program provide one key component, a safe living environment. Even though this is temporary, "safety" is key for families in crisis, most particularly for the children.

Any assistance you may be able to provide will be sincerely appreciated.

Pat Bukoski

Alyse Bukoski

Library Tidings for April

It's likely that you now have a "spring" in your step with the weather warmer and the colorful bulbs poking their heads through the earth. Palm Sunday and Easter are just a few weeks away and a mixture of adult and children's books for the season have been rotated on the card table in Fellowship Hall as well as in the other two libraries.

Last Sunday, Barbara, our Minister of Education mentioned what a beautiful book, with exceptional illustrations, *The Easter Story* by Brian Wildsmith was. In turn, Pastor Ken mentioned how the author had used the donkey as an Easter companion to the Christmas story. He also decided to express this epic like a grand opera yet it's enchanting and simple perspective will engage even the youngest of children. While *Curious George* is currently playing in the movie theaters Avis Britton decided to gift *The Journey That Saved Curious George*. It's a children's book but everyone whose heard of C.G. should read. This true wartime escapes of Margaret and H. A Rey written by Louise Borden and illustrated by Allan Drummond. What an awesome and exciting history undergirds the lives of this couple who created a character who is known and loved the world over. As the German army advanced toward Paris in 1940, Hans and M. Rey fled on their bicycles with a few possessions and their children's book manuscripts.

While in Paris, Louise Borden sifted through countless letters, notebooks etc. She then went on to tap every source she could unearth in Germany, England, Portugal and France including the diaries the Reys wrote from 1936—1940. Her focus was on the Reys before *Curious George* brought them fame. Newspapers from the 40's to the 50's gave details which brought together an exciting story which honors the creativity and courage of a couple during this dark time of European history. It's in the Adult Library.



Parish Nurse

Happy Spring! April is Counseling Awareness Month, National Autism Awareness Month, National Occupational Therapy Month, National Youth Sports Safety Month, National Donate Life Month, Sports Eye Safety Month, National Facial Protection Month, and National Child Abuse Prevention Month. It is also Alcohol Awareness Month. April 3-9 is National Public Health Week and April 7th is World Health Day.

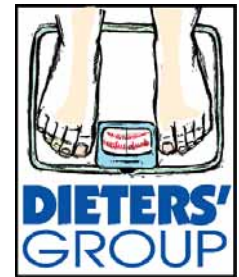
Tammy and I have been receiving a lot of requests for a healthier living support group. We are trying to find out how many of you are truly interested in such a group and try to coordinate a time and a scope for this group. Please see her article below and let us know your thoughts and availability.

Just a reminder: I am available to take blood pressures the last Sunday of every month during coffee hour, but if you need me to check it before then, I have the equipment with me every week.

Sue Vail, our intern parish nurse, and I are available to talk about Health Care Proxies and End of Life Issues if you want. We have Health Care Proxies at the church and they can be filled out and witnessed by Rev. Knox and Tammy during regular business hours. I have information to help you make decisions.

God Bless!
Debbie Pranaitis
Parish Nurse

A Healthy Thought



Many of us like to think we are in shape. Some of us know we are out of shape and some of us just wonder what shape we most resemble - a pear, a pineapple etc. I have been half heartedly dieting since July. I lost 24 pounds since then and well, now I go up and down a little each week. Not much to get excited over. Spring is officially here and I can't wait to get outside, unless I start thinking about putting on a pair of shorts. Yikes! Many of the church members have mentioned to me that they are on a diet. Some are even so brave that they have joined a gym or have a walk buddy. What if... we had a support group where we could discuss things that work for you, or things that don't work for you. We could swap ideas, recipes (with taste tasting occasionally) and possibly do other fitness related activities - maybe a walk schedule with new and interesting places to walk for all levels of ability. Would you be interested?

The battle to loose weight doesn't have to be a battle. I once lost 80 lbs in less then a year and I know how to do it, I just needed the right motivation. It is sometimes hard to find the motivation and even harder to keep that motivation alive and exciting. Experience has shown that when you get together with friends that are encouraging and supportive, it helps. I know of some very nice places to walk, besides the track or a street. I know some great recipes for healthy foods. I have some great workout tapes and believe it or not, I even have a gym in my basement. So what is my problem? I need motivation, support and some new ideas. I need to know I have to be some place for a special walk with my friends. If enough people are interested, I would love to pull together a day and time that works for most of you and start putting together a schedule for morning and/or afternoon walks. I have never been to the Botanical Gardens, but I bet that would be a nice place to walk when it gets warmer. If you are interested in any way, please let me know at 508-832-2845.

~ Tammy

Summer Solstice Celebration Saturday June 17th & Kid Fest!

This all day event is fun for kids of all ages. There will be food, games, activities, arts, crafts, stuff to buy and so much more...



Flippo the clown

Will be back to entertain us with his balloon creations and his magic show!

We will have a plant, book, and yard sale! Items for the yard sale may be brought to the church during business hours.

There will be a Chicken BBQ and a band as well as a campfire on the common in the evening.

This year our art contest will be to decorate a Robert Goddard Rocket. This is a 40" tall rocket made by Cindy Dube and you can decorate it any way that you like! If you are interested and want to get started, please give her a call at 508-832-6646. Examples will be available for viewing at the town Library for the month of May. Get yours now, and get started!!! There is a fee to enter this contest.

New this year:

We will be serving Strawberry Shortcake!!! Also, paint your own bird house!!!



There will be more information to come in the next issue of your Tidings.

From the Minister of Christian Education

Possibilities

Longfellow could take a worthless piece of paper, write a poem on it, and it was worth \$6,000... that is GENIUS.

Rockefeller could sign his name to a piece of paper and it was worth millions... that is CAPITAL.

The government can take some paper, print it, and make it worth \$100.00... that is MONEY.

A mechanic can take material worth \$5.00 and make an article worth \$50.00... that is SKILL.

An artist can take a fifty-cent piece of canvas, paint a picture on it, and it is worth \$1,000.00... that is ART.

God can take a broken life, fill it with the spirit of Christ, and make it a blessing to humanity... that is Redemption.

Easter and springtime are both full of possibilities, especially the possibility for new life in Christ.

Let him take the brokenness in your life and fill it with his loving spirit so that you can be a blessing, too.

Romans 6:4

“We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.”

2 Corinthians 5:17

“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!”

Reminders:

The **Sunday School** children will continue to have Opening Exercises at 10:00 a.m. in the Vestry each week except the 4th Sunday of each month. The 4th Sunday, the children will go directly to the sanctuary for the first part of the service, which will include a Children’s Message and Joyful Noyse.

There will be no Sunday School on April 16 in observance of Easter.

We have started a **new youth group for kids in grades 6-8**. We will be meeting twice a month, once for a planning session that will include a creative devotional time and the other time for a fun activity. Please join us for fun and fellowship.

Spring cleaning

Looking for a place for those items you no longer use? How about donating them to the church for a yard sale in June. We are looking for items that are in good shape and have all their parts. Please bring them to the church and place them on the stage in Fellowship Hall. If you can hold on to larger items until June, that would be great, but don’t throw them away, we can try to work something out. Any questions, please call:

Debbie Mahlert 508-832-3348
Linda Mahlert 508-764-2570
Breyn Brothers 508-832-7376



Do Cats Go to Heaven?

A cat dies and goes to Heaven. God meets him at the gate and says, "You have been a good cat all of these years. Anything you desire is yours, all you have to do is ask."

The cat says, "Well, I lived all my life with a poor family on a farm and had to sleep on hardwood floors."

God says, "Say no more." And instantly, a fluffy pillow appears.

A few days later, 6 mice are killed in a tragic accident and they go to Heaven. God meets them at the gate with the same offer that He made the cat. The mice said, "All our lives we've had to run. Cats, dogs and even women with brooms have chased us. If we could only have a pair of roller skates, we wouldn't have to run anymore."

God says, "Say no more." And instantly, each mouse is fitted with a beautiful pair of tiny roller skates.

About a week later, God decides to check and see how the cat is doing. The cat is sound asleep on his new pillow. God gently wakes him and asks, "How are you doing? Are you happy here?"

The cat yawns and stretches and says, "Oh, I've never been happier in my life. And those Meals on Wheels you've been sending over are the best!"



June Camping Weekend

We are trying to determine the interest in a church group camping trip the weekend of June 23-25. We are looking into several different locations but need to find out what size group we might have. 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.

What Cancer Cannot Do

Cancer is so limited -
 It cannot cripple LOVE,
 It cannot shatter HOPE,
 It cannot corrode FAITH,
 It cannot destroy PEACE,
 It cannot kill FRIENDSHIP,
 It cannot suppress MEMORIES,
 It cannot silence COURAGE,
 It cannot invade the SOUL,
 It cannot steal eternal LIFE,
 It cannot conquer the SPIRIT.

~ Author Unknown

Submitted by someone from the church who is facing this and wanted to offer this piece as support for all the others that are also facing it.

Here We Grow Preschool

Hello Spring! I feel fortunate that this winter wasn't so bad, but I am thrilled that spring has arrived.

The month of March was a very busy one at *Here We Grow* Preschool. Many new faces were seen in the classrooms since it was Parent Volunteer Month. The children had moms and dads who helped for a day, a few dads who were brave enough to do a science experiment and then some moms who stayed to make a special craft with the children. Many of our parents spent time by reading a story at the end of sessions. The staff and children enjoyed having them with us.

Neal Primeaux spent two days with us taking pictures of each class and also individual pictures of each child. 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 done in March. The families of *Here We Grow* sold over \$10,000 of Yankee Candle items which then gave us a profit of \$4,210.00. This money is used for the field trips taken during the school year.

The *Here We Grow* Board of Directors voted to donate 2 slots of our summer program with a value of \$120.00 each for a fundraising auction to benefit the sister of a student who is attending HWG this year. Nicole Lavallee is a six year old girl who has Cerebral Palsy and Cortical Visual Impairment. She and her mom Sandy will be spending time in Florida at the Ocean Hyperbaric Neurologic Center and Therapies4kids. The cost is very high and that is why some families and friends in Auburn have put together this fundraiser to help the Lavallees with the cost of the trip. A few of the staff will also be attending the auction and dinner to help show our support. We wish them the best of luck.

Here We Grow was also up for re-licensing this year. The Department of Early Education and Care visited us in March. I will update you with the results next month. Looking to April, *Here We Grow* will be on break during Holy Week and the week after for spring vacation. Here's hoping for pleasant weather. We will be having Easter parties on April 6th and 7th with the hope that we get a visit from the Easter Bunny.

As of March 3rd, *Here We Grow* is full with wait lists for the school year of 2006-2007. The staff is proud to know that families feel we are the best around. Until next month, I hope everyone is well and enjoying the beautiful weather.

Dawn Murphy,
Here We Grow Preschool Director

Lenten Schedule

Palm Sunday is April 9 ~ 10 am Worship Service

Maundy Thursday is April 13 ~ 7 pm Service

Good Friday is April 14 ~ First Congregational Church will have the Sanctuary opened from 1-3 pm for meditation

Good Friday Community Service will be at Bethel Lutheran Church, 90 Bryn Mawr Ave, Auburn at 12:15 pm this year

Easter Sunday is April 16 ~ with a Sunrise Service at Hillside Cemetery at 6:30 am, a 9:00 am Service and a 10:30 am Service



TIDINGS is a monthly publication of

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April 2006

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