



# 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,*

Nov. 27<sup>th</sup>  
1<sup>st</sup> Sunday in Advent  
Worship Service at 10 a.m.

Dec. 4<sup>th</sup>  
2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday in Advent  
Communion Sunday with  
Deacons’ offering  
& food pantry 10 a.m.

Dec. 11<sup>th</sup>  
3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday in Advent



## Advent Schedule

~ All Are Welcome ~

Dec. 18<sup>th</sup>  
4<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Advent  
Lessons & Carols during  
Service 10 a.m.

Dec. 24<sup>th</sup>  
Christmas Eve  
5 p.m. Family Service  
11 p.m. Candlelight  
Communion Service

Dec. 25<sup>th</sup>  
Christmas Day 10 a.m.  
Worship Service

Other December activities include **“Parents’ Night Out”** on **December 16<sup>th</sup>** from 6 to 8 p.m., **YOM’s Christmas Party** will follow “Parents’ Night Out;” **Christmas Potluck and Sing-along** on **December 17<sup>th</sup>** at 5 p.m., and our annual **Cookie Walk** during coffee hour on **December 18<sup>th</sup>**.

### Christmas Fund 2011

The generous gifts of UCC congregations and individuals to the Christmas Fund enabled the Pension Boards’ Ministerial Assistance program to provide some form of ministerial assistance to approximately 1,600 persons over the past year.

- Christmas “Thank You” gift checks were sent to approximately 900 persons in 2010. Of those who received checks, 20 are over 100 years of age. The 900 gifts totaled \$270,000.
- Monthly pension supplementation is being provided to 434 persons. These gifts total \$103,401 per month. A significant part of the annual total of \$1,234,344 comes from the Christmas Fund.
- Quarterly health premium supplementation is being provided to 267 families, totaling \$160,608 per quarter. All of the funding for health premium supplementation is derived from the Christmas Fund.
- Emergency grants totaling \$38,163.35 were provided to 24 individuals and families from January 1 through July 31, 2011.



BRINGING OUR GIFTS

Your gifts are needed more than ever to help the growing number of retirees whose low income annuities make it difficult to meet increased living costs. You’ll find an offering envelope enclosed in this month’s *Tidings*. Please return it to the church, and thank you for your generosity.

The Patch is closed for another year.....Our profits for 2011 were \$5,681.35.

Here is a summary of each of our responsibilities for the fundraiser:

- Pumpkin Patch:
- Owns over 1200 acres of land in New Mexico
  - Plants, cultivates and harvests over 1200 acres of pumpkins annually (over 40 million pounds)
  - Has people load hundreds of trucks
  - Deliver pumpkins (at no cost to us) driving over 1.6 million miles during a 30 day period
  - Mark and price our stock
  - Give us (free) stickers, stories, cookbook, coloring pages, stencils, publicity info, videos, etc. to aid us in making a more successful fundraiser
  - Man phones 7 days a week so that we can report our daily sales and talk about any concerns or ideas we may have
  - Use an honor system for over 120 churches to report sales in 48 states
- Our Church:
- Request the day and time we like our delivery
  - Unload (fun time for all who form a human assembly line to get the pumpkins, gourds, wee bees, minis, etc. off of the truck and onto pallets and displays)
  - Sit in the beautiful patch and sell
  - Send check for % of profits to Pumpkin Patch

We thank everyone who took part in making this year such a success.

A special thank you to Denise and Judy for all of the extra help, time and encouragement they have given.

We look forward to next year, imagine the number of pumpkins, gourds, etc. we will be unloading (a full truck?)!

We are hoping to have a planning meeting in the spring for ideas, suggestions and so forth to make 2012 even greater in the Patch.

Thank you,

Shirley, Jen and Diane



## SAVE THE DATE

*Massachusetts Conference United Church of Christ,  
Central Association Service of Installation for*

***Rev. Brian M. Grover***

on Sunday, February 19, 2012  
at 4:00pm to be held at

First Congregational Church, UCC  
128 Central Street, Auburn, MA 01501  
(508) 832-2845

Brian has been called as Pastor to the  
First Congregational Church, UCC in Auburn, MA

Please plan to join us on **Tuesday,  
December 6th, at 5:30 p.m.**  
for the movie *Facing Your Giants*.  
This will be featured in conjunction  
with the Spirit Potluck Supper.

So, mark your calendars, and  
we hope to see you there!





### The Normal Way

As we prepare for Christmas with our Advent activities, I hope you are enjoying a time to prepare for the gift given to us at Christmas. I know this time can be hectic, stressful and over scheduled. There are in-laws to visit. Where will we have Christmas? A question which gets even more complex when a divorce enters into the mix. Is it Mom or Dad's turn to have the kids for Christmas?

It is common to say, "Calm down, take it easy." But is that just adding more stress? Not only are you stressed from all the pageants, school activities and family gatherings, but you should also be stressed out that you aren't simplifying your Christmas. So to a busy schedule you have to add "simple" activities like making a snowman, drinking hot chocolate, reading the Christmas story out loud to the family. It can all be too much.

I fear our Christmas trouble is related to a larger trouble in society. I call it "The Perfect Expectation." I see this most often in weddings. Especially in the *Bridezilla* show. Everything has to be perfect. It is the Bride's (or Groom's, or Mother of the Bride's) perfect day. If anything goes wrong, the whole thing is ruined.

There are two problems with that idea. In reality, there is nothing perfect that involves humans. Humans make mistakes. So an insistence on perfection is sure to be disappointing. It is good to try to reach for perfection, but to expect perfection is to be disappointed. Second, a wedding is not that important. *The Marriage* is what is important. The wedding is only the start of the marriage.

Let us compare two marriages of the last year. The Royal Wedding had several errors. The Maid of Honor, I am told, stole the Bride's thunder. Pippa looked better in her dress than Kate. The Groom's family disrespected the Bride's guests by making them go to a less fancy reception than the one the Royal Family hosted, which was considered a huge etiquette breach in America, and a sign of why Americans rejected Royalty and Nobles. But Prince William and Duchess Kate are still married, and every week as I am in the grocery store some magazine assures me that Kate is pregnant.

Now compare the Royal Wedding to the Kardashian Wedding. The same magazines that say Kate is pregnant tell me Kim Kardashian was the perfect bride and had a perfect wedding. So perfect that she made an 8-10 million dollar profit on the event. Unfortunately, Kim filed for divorce after 72 days of wedded life. Now she is called (in the grocery store magazines) a fraud, a money grubber, a fool. Kim is a joke. Her wedding is a joke. People are ridiculing her "perfect" wedding. So, which would you want, the perfect wedding and a failed marriage or a flawed wedding, but a marriage that endures? (so far, as of this writing)

So with Christmas, what is the larger goal? We are honoring our God. We are building family. As you go through December, keep what is important in mind. Do not try to have a perfect Christmas, there is no such thing. (Think of all that went wrong at the first Christmas: having to travel while pregnant to a weird small town, finding no room in the inn. Shepherds and angels disturbing the baby's sleep. Herod wanting to kill the baby. All this is no one's idea of perfect.) Rather than try for a perfect Christmas, maybe set your sights on a memorable one.

Out of all my Christmas trees, the one I most remember is the cat spruce. A cat spruce smells like a used litter box. You do not catch the bad smell until after the tree warms up for a day or two. From that cat spruce, came the tradition of putting up the tree a day or two before we decorate it.

Remember this Advent to love your family, perfect or not.

Pastor Brian

### Sermon Titles for December

12/4 ~ "Angels"

12/11 ~ "Shepherds"

12/18 ~ The FCC Choir Presents: "Lessons & Carols"

12/24 ~ "Baby Jesus" - 5 p.m. service

12/25 ~ "Joseph"

"Mary, the Unwed Mother" - 11 p.m.



## Lessons & Carols

FEATURING: The First Church Choir  
THE FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF AUBURN

Sunday, December 18th, 2011 at 10:00 a.m.

*The Christmas Miracle*

*Mary's Little Boy Child*

*Gesù Bambino*

*Joy to the World with Glory to God*

*Angels We Have Heard on High*

Minister of Music: Heather Moore

The First Congregational Choir

### Soprano I

Lori Stockhaus  
Tori Stockhaus  
Pam Tentor

### Altos

Lisa Cove  
Debbie Mahlert

### Baritones

Alex Brownell  
Ron Hanks

### Soprano II

Sue Klaucke  
Linda Mahlert

**Narrator** - Pastor Brian

# *Christ the Savior is Born!*

## Walk, Sister, Walk! Young Women Peacebuilders in Massachusetts January 14, 2012

Four women peace builders from  
Chile, Paraguay and the United States share their stories

Walk Sister Walk will be presented here at First Congregational Church in Auburn on  
January 14, 2012 in cooperation with the Chile Partnership Committee of the Massachusetts  
Conference of the United Church of Christ.

(While the date has been confirmed, we are still in the process of setting a time for this event. So, please mark your calendars for January 14th and look for more information in upcoming bulletins and the January *Tidings*.)

*Walk, sister, walk. In the raging wind, walk. Past the rubble of the earthquake, walk. Among the ruins of the tsunami, walk. Through our ravaged communities, walk. Walk with our grandmothers with wisdom from the past. Walk with our mothers with nurture for the present. Walk with our daughters who dream of new beginnings. Come, sister, walk with me for you do not walk alone.*

*Elena Huegel, Global Ministries Missionary*

Elena is a teacher, a storyteller, a poet, and an artist. As program director of a peace and environmental education camp in central Chile, she uses a variety of imaginative teaching methods to create a context for spiritual transformation and healing.

*Carolina Fernández, Community Development Consultant*

Through her passion for the history, customs, dreams, rights and social and natural environment of rural communities, Carolina has found a way to build peace in her native country of Paraguay. Her desire is to accompany individuals and communities in their processes of growth, discovery and healing.

*Carrie Prestwood-Taylor, Civil and Environmental Engineer*

Carrie is a recent engineering school graduate with a love of environment. As an engineer, Carrie hopes to use her education to provide clean water for those in need and her cross-cultural experiences to build a peaceful world for future generations.

*Débora Martínez, Chef*

Débora is studying international cuisine and oversees the food services at the Shalom Center. She sings in the choir at her local church and plays the violin, the mandolin, the guitar and the tambourine. Débora is helping to build a better world with good food, beautiful music and a spirit of service.

*By the tender mercy of our God, the dawn from on high will break upon us, to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace. Luke 1:78-79*

As 2011 winds down, we are faced with several openings remaining on the various Boards and Committees within our church. The most pressing need continues to be the Board of Deacons and Board of Education as well as the Nominating Committee which, as of right now, is going into the new year with no members on the Committee. If you are considering volunteering, but are unsure which Board or Committee could use your time and talents, please see Pat Bukoski and Michele Schillinger.

We look forward to talking with you.  
Have a wonderful holiday season.

the Nominating Committee

### CRADLE ROLL ATTENDANTS

12/4	Cindy Dube	12/11	Sue Campbell
12/18	Paula Comeau	12/25	No Cradle Roll

### MIDDLE SCHOOL ROTATION

12/4	Judy Murphy	12/11	Jen Bohn
12/18	Alex Brownwell	12/25	Merry Christmas



### *Happy Holidays from Here We Grow Preschool*



The children and staff are preparing for the busy holiday season which is approaching very fast. We look forward to the holidays, the excitement they bring and the time off it allows the staff to have with their own families.

Moving on to the events which took place in November, the children of *Here We Grow* learned about the first Thanksgiving and the act of giving to others. They had the opportunity to bring in food items for the Giving Basket. Denise and Judy were kind enough to sort the foods, Jean McPherson chose what she needed for Jeremiah's Inn Thanksgiving Day Feast, and Pastor Brian donated the rest to families in need throughout Auburn.

We celebrated our Thanksgiving feasts on Monday the 21<sup>st</sup> with the 4 year old children and on Tuesday the 22<sup>nd</sup> with the 3 year old children. Both days went well with a lot of help from our parent volunteers. Our appetizer was cornbread which was made by the 3 year olds, a friendship fruit salad and dip, cold meats, cheese and crackers, and for dessert we had brownies topped off with cool whip, which were made by the 4 year olds. Thank you to Dave Sampson and Wayne Prouty for their help with carrying the tables and chairs to the vestry and then returning them to the classrooms.

With plans well on the way for the next winter holiday, the children have gone from Thanksgiving songs to singing songs for our winter holiday programs. During the month of December, *Here We Grow* will once again participate in the Marines' "Toys for Tots" Campaign. The holiday programs will be on December 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup>. A tradition we have held is that the 4 year old children will sign and sing Happy Birthday to Baby Jesus. The children are eagerly awaiting the arrival of Santa. Once again I'd like to thank Bob Murray for agreeing to be "Santa".



On a sad, but also exciting note, the *Here We Grow* staff and families wish Kara Murray the best of luck in her new job opportunity with the Worcester Public Schools as a Speech Language Pathologist, her specialty. Replacing her in room 4 will be Cristi Corey who has been a teacher at HWG for four years. Kathleen Lanava will be working with Anne Coyne in room 1.

The school will be closed from December 23<sup>rd</sup> - January 2<sup>nd</sup>. The *Here We Grow* staff and families wish all of you a safe and happy holiday season.

Until 2012, Happy Holidays to all —

Dawn Murphy, Director, *Here We Grow* Preschool

#### FROM THE TRUSTEES

All Committee budget requests are due immediately.

Also, there will be no December church supper. Please pass the word.

#### Happy birthday to:

Rebecca McPherson	~	Dec. 28th
Lori-Ann Stockhaus	~	Dec. 28th
Donald Slongwhite	~	Dec. 30th



## Library Tidings

Several years have passed since a lovely lady stooped with age, but standing tall in all other respects, could no longer attend church. She was an avid reader and you are about to read a note copied from the one she included with the book, *The Butterfly*, which she gifted to the church in 2008.

"I hope you know how much I enjoy and appreciate the Library. You demonstrate good taste and imagination in your fine selection of books. I am pleased to enclose a very small contribution for your selection. Libraries are a priority in my life, a legacy I owe to my Mother who helped me acquire my first card when I was 6 — I am now 89!

I'm also attaching a book which I thought might be of interest to children. Butterflies are a living confirmation of the Resurrection.

Thank you for the privilege of access to the Library.

In Faith,  
Norma Card"

And, so, Norma's memory will be kept with us, beginning with *The Butterfly* amongst the Christmas display.

Along with the Adult and Children's Libraries, Fellowship Hall and Coffee Hour will feature Christmas books for all ages again this year. Sign-out books on cards or lists as always. Maybe one of these brief reviews will tempt you to a little quiet time of spirited inspiration.

### Adult Selections:

*The Golden Ring* by John Snyder . . . An extraordinary remembrance based on truth and shared with the author by his grandmother. On her 9th birthday her parents gave her a beautiful golden ring. It turned out to be a harbinger of outstanding events and discoveries that changed family feelings forever about Christmas.

*Christmas Miracles* by Brad Steiger and Sherry Hansen Steiger. . . The story of the first Christmas, as told by the Gospels of Matthew and Luke, is based on 5 miracles of faith and love that have been held sacred for over 2000 years and are listed. The book is filled with short stories of larger than life miracles that make Christmas come alive.

*The Christmas Barn* by C.S. Lewis . . . In 1939 when a snowstorm destroys their home in the Appalachian Mountains, 12 year old Roxie and her family move into a barn and make preparations for a very unusual Christmas celebration. As you read you'll feel you are there with them in the mountains.

### For Children:

*Dear Santa—please don't come this year* - in memory of Michael Clark . . . Who believes in Santa Claus? Even Santa himself has doubts until children open his eyes to the real magic of Christmas. A beautifully illustrated, and told, story that everyone can enjoy.

*The Most Important Christmas* by James Nelesen . . . Simple, but appealing illustrations that fit the story so well. Emily Morgan's Christmas would be the best in her life if she could be Mary in the Christmas play at school. Such disappointment, when she learns that she's not going to be the star. But, somehow it works out okay when she learns one of the best lessons of what Christmas is all about.

*The First Christmas Tree* by Hertha Tauli . . . A legend about decorating a Christmas tree when a ragged, little stranger finds shelter with a Black Forest forester's children on Christmas Eve. In gratitude, he tells them a story about a little spruce tree that was showered with stars that brought joy to the Christ Child in Bethlehem. Next morning he was gone, but beside their front door was a little spruce along with stars and bells and a voice telling who their guest had been. The next Christmas the family lights the candles on their first Christmas tree in remembrance of the Christ Child and the little tree of Bethlehem.

May the Christmas message fill your heart with love, joy and peace.

The Library Committee

Dear friends,

Thanks to a gift of property and financial capital from United Congregational Church, WAMS is moving its office from Auburn to Worcester. Please accept my heartfelt appreciation and that of the WAMS Board of Directors for your tremendous hospitality through our two decades of shared life. Not only did you donate pleasant office space and the use of a fine conference room and fellowship hall (not to mention the copier), but you were always among the first to support WAMS' program initiatives with dollars, talent and elbow grease.

You also have gifted me with your personal friendship and been quick to demonstrate your interest and concern at key moments in my life, from the birth of daughter Liz to the funerals of my parents. You always have gone out of your way to inquire how things are going and to speak a word of encouragement. So I am grateful to you in a personal way as well as for your generous contributions to WAMS.

Thanks to your support, WAMS' activities have expanded over the years and now, with the gift from United Congregational, we are poised to expand our programs even further and to help struggling families and neighborhoods to an extent we could not have imagined a couple of years ago. I know our paths will continue to cross often because First Auburn is a mission and outreach leader in the Central Association of the United Church of Christ and I believe you always will be. I'm going to miss seeing you on a regular basis, certainly, but I'm sure our partnership in the mission field will only continue to grow in scope and depth.

Thank you for everything. Blessed be the tie that binds.

Bob Bachelder

Christmas arrangements made of fresh greens will once again be available for you to purchase during coffee hour on Dec. 11th and 18th. All the greens are gathered locally, so there is no expense involved. All monies taken in will be split equally and go towards the Outreach Ark and the church's general fund. When doing your holiday shopping keep these in mind, they make lovely hostess gifts and most will be suitable to use as a table centerpiece.



We enjoy making these and hope you will support this small fundraiser.

Judy Murphy & Cindy Dube



"He's today's greeter."

### Joyful Noyse Schedule

12/4, 12/11, 12/18 11:15 a.m. rehearsal

12/24 4:45 p.m. rehearsal  
Christmas Eve Family Service at 5:00 p.m.  
"This Little Light" & "Seek Ye First"

12/25 10:00 a.m. Service Christmas Day  
(no early rehearsal) "This Little Light" & "Seek Ye First"

### Coffee Hour Hosts:

12/4, 12/11 ~ Nominating/Scholarship

12/18 ~ Prudential Committee

12/25 ~ No Coffee Hour 1/1, 1/8 ~ Trustees



### Outreach News

In 2009 First Congregational Church in Auburn assisted in sponsoring, through a Sibley Fund Grant, the start-up funding for Dismas Family Farm, in Oakham, MA. This is a working farm producing crops, animals, and finished wood products, as well as jams, granola and candles. Their year round housing lodges former prisoners that are expected to either work the farm or be employed full-time as they reintegrate back into society. If anyone is interested in supporting this program, Dismas Family Farm has for sale cage-free eggs, available at Isador's Deli in Oxford and soon artichoke coop. Or, another way to support this group is through direct donations such as: Sponsoring one House Dinner \$40; YMCA membership for one Almost Home resident just out of jail \$20; Work boots for a resident starting a new job \$50; New sheets for a resident just out of jail \$30; Bus pass for one resident starting a new job across the City \$40; One month newspaper subscription for an entire Almost Home class of 12 residents \$225. Mail donations to: Dismas House, PO Box 30125, Worcester, MA 01603 or contact them at (508) 882-0000. Check out the Dismas House website: <http://dismashouse.org/>

Outreach is looking for a church member(s) to take over the sales of the Hope for Housing (HfH) grocery cards. We're currently looking into the possibility of selling the cards once a month instead of weekly. The responsibility would include being our church's contact person with HfH for selling the cards, recording sales, requesting re-supplies on-line with HfH and picking up new cards to start the cycle again. If interested, please see Sue MacPhee for more details. The HfH cards will continue to be available into January 2012... and beyond, if we have a volunteer.

Lastly and most sincerely, we thank everyone who gave so generously to the elementary school children at The Goddard School of Science & Technology in Worcester. All 23 requested bags for coats were filled along with extra hats and gloves. Through your love, kindness and generosity, there is a group of children who feel loved and are warm. Thank you all!

In Love, Hope, Peace & Understanding,  
Sue MacPhee, Outreach Committee Secretary

The Greater Auburn Community Chorus presents *The Many Joys of Christmas* on Saturday, December 10th at 7:00 p.m. and Sunday, December 11th at 2:30 p.m. at Auburn High School. The Chorus includes our very own Barbara Allaire, Jean McPherson, Pam Tentor, and Marjorie Zimmerman. Tickets are available at the door.

Need a gift for the person that truly has everything and needs nothing? Want to make a real difference to a family in need?

For a small donation of \$25 you can purchase a bag of food that will feed a hungry family in Haiti. Your recipient will receive a beautiful card telling them about the donation in their name and a bracelet to keep as a reminder of their generous gift. They can even "decorate" the bag that will be used to deliver the food if they, or you so choose. Some of you may remember these bags from when Paul Deasy was our guest preacher in October. Randy and I have personally witnessed the difference these bags make to families in Haiti. See Jennifer during coffee hour if you're interested in this beautiful gift and expression of love for our fellow brothers and sisters in Christ.



Blessings,  
Jennifer Bohn



Happy Holidays and Merry Christmas to all.  
The holidays can be both a very joyous time for some and a very sad time for others. I do have CARE NOTES on the Table in Fellowship Hall that might be of some help.  
Please feel free to help yourself.

God Bless!  
Debbie Pranaitis  
Parish Nurse



**Henry Hilmer Sundeen**, 80, of Auburn, died suddenly November 4, 2011 in his home. He leaves his loving wife of 54 years, Carole (Sparhawk) Sundeen; his two daughters, Tammy Seeley and her husband Dennis, Wendy Lavelly and her husband Hank; his two sons, Scott Sundeen and his wife Cheryl, and Brian Sundeen and his wife Jennifer; he leaves 8 grandchildren and 1 great grandchild. He is survived by his brother, Gordon Sundeen of Florida. He was preceded in death by his sister, Helen Nelson.

Henry was born in Worcester, the son of the late Hilmer and Mildred (Granfors) Sundeen. He was educated in Shrewsbury schools, later graduating from Worcester Boys Trade. A proud Korean War Veteran, Henry served his country as a member of the United States Army. Henry worked as a machinist for Morgan Construction Co. for many years, retiring in 1998. He was a Scout Master for Boy Scout Troop 101 in Auburn for 22 years, a member of the Joel H. Prouty Lodge of Masons and served as a Deacon here at the First Congregational Church in Auburn where he was a longtime member.

A funeral service was held on Monday, November 7th at 10:00 a.m. at our Church with burial at Hillside Cemetery.

**Norma Edythe Card**, of 92, a longtime Auburn resident, entered into eternal peace on November 8, 2011. She was born in Providence, RI, the daughter of the late Clifford E. and Emma E. (Millard) Card, and had lived in Auburn for 90 years. Norma is survived by her dear friend, Loretta Hall, and by nieces and nephews including, Richard E. Wilson of Riverside, RI. Norma attended Auburn schools and was a graduate of Auburn High School. She then attended Salter Secretarial School. Norma worked as an executive secretary for many years including as an employee of the Worcester Telegram & Gazette, where she worked for 20 years, retiring in 1989. Norma was a member of the Auburn Historical Society, the Auburn Grange, the Auburn Library and the American Cancer Society, as a volunteer. She also volunteered at Old Sturbridge Village and at the Cummings School of Veterinary Science at Tufts University, North Grafton.

Relatives and friends are invited to celebrate Norma's wonderful life on Saturday, December 3rd at 11 AM in the Britton-Wallace Funeral Home, 91 Central Street, Auburn, where a service of remembrance and thanksgiving will be held. Burial will follow in Hillside Cemetery, Auburn. There are no visiting hours.

Both Henry and Norma will be greatly missed. Please keep their loved ones in your thoughts and prayers.

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

John 11:25

## From the Director of Religious Education

Merry Christmas to everyone! I pray you will all feel the love and magic that is the season. We have a lot to offer this Christmas season.

### DECEMBER HAPPENINGS:

**Please register for all events so we can plan accordingly.** If you decide at the last minute to join us, you are certainly welcome, it just helps with planning if we have an idea of the number of participants to expect, so please sign-up on the Sunday School bulletin board in Fellowship Hall.

#### FRIDAY, DECEMBER 16th, 6-8P.M. PARENTS' NIGHT OUT

Spend a couple hours with someone special or get those last minute gifts wrapped. Youth On a Mission will entertain the kids with games and crafts as well as share a meal of pizza and juice. Please bring an alternate food choice if your child can't eat pizza, or let me know and we will look for an alternate. Also on Dec. 16th, from 8-9:00 will be the YOM CHRISTMAS PARTY AND GRAB.

#### SATURDAY DECEMBER 17th POTLUCK and CAROL SING-ALONG 5:00 P.M.

Welcome the last week before Christmas with an enjoyable evening of food, friends and song. Those that went last year had a wonderful time. We will also be filling the Christmas boxes for the shut-ins during the evening - a wonderful time and a great cause.

#### SUNDAY DECEMBER 18th 11:00 A.M. COOKIE WALK DURING COFFEE HOUR

Once again we will help you with your Christmas baking. Purchase a container and take a walk down cookie lane and fill it to the brim. (Cookie & tin donations are greatly appreciated.)

Again, please sign-up on the left corner bulletin board in fellowship hall.

#### LOOKING AHEAD

Sunday January 8<sup>th</sup> Epiphany Skit. Be sure to join us for this original skit describing the 3 magi by church members both young and old.

With His Guidance We Serve,

Jean McPherson  
Director of Religious Education



*Merry Christmas*

The family of Henry Sundeen would like to express their heartfelt thanks for all the love and support from the Congregation during this difficult time. It is greatly appreciated.

They also want to thank everyone who baked for the gathering following the funeral. Again, it was very much appreciated.



Tyler Vernon Eknaian was born Nov. 10, 2011, and weighed in at 7 lbs, 15 oz, 20" long. His parents are Kevin and Jessica Eknaian. Proud grandparents are Sue and Stan MacPhee. Congratulations to all!

You have two options for placing a dedication in our Christmas bulletins this year. Either you may order a poinsettia (of various colors, sizes and prices) or you can give as little as one dollar (or any dollar amount you wish) towards the purchase of grocery cards. All the money that is collected (by Dec. 11th) will then be used to purchase grocery cards through Hope for Housing. The cards will then be donated to our food pantry for distribution to those seeking assistance this winter. So, whether you purchase a poinsettia or give towards a grocery card, your dedication will be included as an insert in our Christmas bulletins.

**Both the poinsettia order forms and the grocery card dedication forms are located on the table in Fellowship Hall, or you may call the church office, (508) 832-2845 to have one mailed to you.**

The Trustees are looking to hire a reliable individual to serve as a back-up for snow removal when our sexton, Craig, is unavailable due to his full time position at the MACUCC. Snow removal will consist of clearing all church building entrances, steps and sidewalks. This position requires early morning availability, as shoveling must be completed before 8:30 a.m. If you're interested, please call the church office at 508-832-2845.

Once again the Deacons will be delivering Christmas Baskets to shut-ins. We're planning to prepare 24 baskets. (This will take place on Dec. 17th as part of the Christmas carol sing -along & potluck get together.)

Look in Fellowship Hall for a list of items that are needed and a donation sign -up sheet, or call the church office if you would like to donate.

*TIDINGS is a monthly publication of*

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

Phone: (508) 832-2845

Office Hours: Mon.-Fri. 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Email: [secretary@auburnfirstucc.org](mailto:secretary@auburnfirstucc.org)  
or [PastorBrian@auburnfirstucc.org](mailto:PastorBrian@auburnfirstucc.org)

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

*Web: [auburnfirstucc.org](http://auburnfirstucc.org)*



BULK RATE  
U.S. POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
Non-Profit Org.  
Permit No. 6  
Auburn, Mass

**December 2011**

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

**OR CURRENT RESIDENT**