

Herald of Good TIDINGS



“Get you up to a high mountain, O Zion, herald of good tidings; lift up your voice with strength, O Jerusalem, herald of good tidings, lift it up, fear not; say to the cities of Judah, ‘Behold your God!’”
Isaiah 40:9

From the Pastor

With the weather oscillating between a foot of snow and several inches of rain in January, it is time to prepare for February.

Poor February, the most hated month. So hated that Emperor Augustus was able to steal two days from February and give them to July and August. The Emperor wanted the months honoring his Father Julius (July) and himself (August) to be among the longest months of the year. Where were the revolts to keep February at 30 days? There were none. February has no allies.

Yet, even at 28 days, February is too long. The winter weather of February has gotten old. February has little going for it. It does not have the celebrations of Christmas or the promise of the New Year.

The great holiday of February is Valentine’s Day which seems to be a relationship test more than a cause of celebration. Can you think of any holiday more despised and disregarded than Valentine’s Day?

Lent will again start in February. Ash Wednesday falls on February 14th, Valentine’s Day. So, take your beloved out to church at 7 P.M. to get ashes — very romantic.

Easter will fall on April Fools’ Day. So that should be fun. Hopefully the pranks won’t be too disruptive and will be genuinely funny.

Again this year, we will have soup and sandwiches during Lent on Wednesdays starting Feb. 21 at 6 P.M. The committees sign up to make the soup/sandwiches and take a free will offering. We are almost always done with the program by 7 P.M.

This year’s theme is *The Ten Commandments*, the 1956 movie starring Charlton Heston and Yule Brynner. This is a movie I grew up watching every Easter on TV. I think of it still as the most popular and well-known telling of the Exodus story. The script closely follows the Bible and the scholarship of its day. Even though it is the most well-known retelling of the Exodus story and tried to be accurate to the Bible, a good movie has to be different from a book. So, *The Ten Commandments* makes quite a few changes from the Bible.

We hope to see you on Valentine’s Day, Easter, the Lenten Soup and Sandwich Wednesdays and, of course, Sundays. Soon, February will be over.

God Bless,
Pastor Brian

We will be looking to do our **Worship Planning Meeting on Sunday, February 11**. This is a meeting at which we go over the details for our special services in the spring. All members are welcome at the meeting if they have input on our Easter, Holy Week, or Lenten services. In addition to Pastor Brian, Heather and Jean, **representatives from the BOCE, Deacons and Music Committee are expected to attend.**

We are targeting **Sunday, February 18**, as the service in which we will dedicate our new pew Bibles. We will, however, continue to accept individual dedications beyond this date, until all Bibles have been dedicated. (Order forms are included on page 4 of this newsletter.)



We would love to feature your special occasion (birthday, anniversary, etc.) in an upcoming newsletter. Just fill out a form on the table in Fellowship Hall and leave in the church office, or call the office to have a form emailed to you or mailed via the U.S. postal service.

COFFEE HOUR HOSTS

2/4	Stewardship Committee
2/11, 2/18	Outreach Committee
2/25, 3/4	Personnel Committee
3/11	Board of Deacons

COMMUNITY SUPPER

Saturday, February 17th, at 5 p.m.

\$10.00 - adults
children 10 & under are free

Please join us for a delicious
community supper (menu TBD).

Our Boy Scout Troop 101 has graciously offered to prepare the meal, but at this time, no group has signed up to help serve, so **your assistance is greatly needed and appreciated.**

FROM THE DIRECTOR OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Happy Valentine's Day! Remember that we are all given the best Valentine in the way of unconditional love from God our Father.

As of this writing, we have not gone to Monadnock Encounter weekend, so I will tell you about it next month. If past years are any indication of the life-changing experiences that can come from these weekends, we will come back a renewed and closer group than when we left.

I want to thank everyone who covered classes, since most of the teachers were either on vacation or at Monadnock that weekend. We are still looking for one person a week to "monitor" the classes. All this involves is spending 10 or so minutes in each class so we can stay in compliance of the church bylaws. Please consider just ONE Sunday and see the amazing things going on in each class.

YOM Spring fundraiser of butter braids and Lyman crisps will be 2/18 - 3/4 with a delivery date of 3/24. This is a well-received fundraiser each year. Please see a YOM member or me if you would like to order. We will be selling at coffee hours and thank you in advance for your help.

Let all that you do be done in Love. 1Corinthians 16:14
Jean McPherson



WITH THANKSGIVING . . .

Jane Standing wishes to thank her church family for all the support and prayers during her family's recent loss.

Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn. Romans 12:15 NIV



Here We Grow Preschool

We made it through the first month of a new year, I hope the next month isn't as cold as the last one.

Here We Grow will be conducting a "Calendar Giveaway" again this year. The sale part of this fundraiser will run the month of February. The give-away part will be done each day in March. If you would like to purchase a calendar, they are \$10.00 each and have some wonderful prizes, each with at least a \$20.00 or more value. Stop into the **Here We Grow** office or see Denise. Thank You in advance for your support. All monies earned go towards field trips, special programs, equipment for the classrooms, and enrichment classes offered to the children (move & groove, music, Reptile Man and Love Bug Hollow Puppets).

We have started enrollment for next year, and our four-year-old classes are filling up. Our Open House will be on March 6th, from 9:00-11:00. We still have openings in most sessions. If you know of a friend, neighbor, or relative who is looking for a preschool, please send them our way.

When thinking about whether to send your child to preschool for the first time, keep in mind what you are hoping to get out of the experience. We start accepting children when they are 2 years, nine months and, for most, it is all about learning to be with other children away from Mom and Dad, and learning to take direction from other people. We have a few class options for our 4-year-old children which focus on getting ready for kindergarten. We are also fortunate to be able to offer a young 4's class. This class is a blend of what the 3-year-old and 4-year-old classes do. It is designed for those children who need an extra year of preschool due to not making the kindergarten cutoff in their town. For more information about any of our classes, please feel free to stop in the office or call 508-832-8184.

The school will be closed for winter break from February 19-23. We hope you all have a warm and healthy month.

Cristi Corey, Director, **Here We Grow** Preschool

February Sermon Topics:

- Feb. 4 "Have You not Known? Have You not Heard?"
- Feb. 11 "Transformed"
- Feb. 18 "Now After John Was Arrested . . ."
- Feb. 25 "The Fear of the Lord" — Children's Time
"You Do not Talk About the Messiah in the Villages of Caesarea Philippi"

Bell Choir Seeking a Drummer - for an upcoming anthem based on a Native American Melody, the piece would be greatly enhanced if we had someone with a soft drum that could accompany us. Projected performance date would be sometime between mid-February and mid-March. Rehearsals are Sunday afternoons at 2:30. Drummer probably only needed at 2 or 3 rehearsals. No age restrictions. If interested or you want more details, contact Herb Mower at mower@alum.mit.edu or 508-434-2864.

Cookbooks continue to be available to purchase during coffee hours on Sunday. You may also contact Michele at: library@auburnfirstucc.org with "cookbook" as the subject or call 508-259-2239.

POTLUCK SUPPERS

Join us for our monthly potluck suppers beginning at 5:30 on movie nights and 6:00 on book discussion nights.

On February 20th at 5:30 p.m. we'll view the movie, *War Room*. — "With great jobs, a beautiful daughter and a dream house, the Jordans seem to have it all. Appearances can be deceiving, however, as husband Tony flirts with temptation and wife Elizabeth becomes increasingly bitter, crumbling under the strain of a failing marriage. Their lives take an unexpected turn for the better when Elizabeth meets her newest client, Miss Clara, who encourages the couple to find happiness through prayer."

The March 20th potluck (beginning at 6 p.m.) will focus on the book, *A Midwife's Tale: The Life of Martha Ballard, Based on Her Diary, 1785-1812* by Laurel Ulrich.

All are welcome to join us.

Join us on **February 4th**
as we celebrate
Boy Scout Sunday
during our 10 a.m. service.





February is AMD/Low Vision Awareness Month, American Heart Month, International Prenatal Infection Prevention Month, National Children's Dental Health Month, and Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month.

- Feb. 2 Go Red for Women (American Heart Association)
- Feb. 2 Give Kids a Smile Day (American Dental Association)
- Feb. 4 World Cancer Day and National Donor Day
- 2/7-14 Congenital Heart Defect Awareness Week
- Feb. 22 National Heart Valve Disease Awareness Day
- 2/28-3/3 National Eating Disorder Screening Program

There are papers on the health table in Fellowship Hall about signs of a heart attack. The signs can be very different for a female. One of our parishioners had a heart attack just over a year ago and her sign was a pain in her back. Fortunately, she was in the hospital and they acted immediately. After stent placement, she is doing well. A recent EKG showed everything is okay. Had she had a pain in her back at home, she might have disregarded it.

The flu is worse this year than what the vaccine covers! If you don't feel well, see the doctor. Otherwise, please be careful. Handwashing is still the best defense against spreading germs. Cough into your elbow. Even coughs seem to be lingering forever this season.

Remember the closet for medical equipment. If you have any wheelchairs that aren't being used, please bring them to the closet. If you know that you're going to need something for an upcoming surgery, take the equipment while it's there. It might be gone when you need it.

Stay healthy, wash your hands!

Debbie Pranaitis, Parish Nurse
508-612-4521

New Bibles have been selected to replace the old ones. An order for 192 pew Bibles (New International Version) has arrived. The purchase price is \$12 each.

Please consider purchasing one or more in honor of and/or memory of loved ones.

As we did previously with our new hymnals, dedications are in the process of being printed onto labels and affixed to the inside front cover. Please complete an order form and include a check payable to First Congregational Church noting "Memorial Fund — Bible" in the memo section.

BIBLE ORDER FORM

Name _____

Phone # _____

I would like to purchase _____ (quantity) Bibles at a cost of \$12 each.

Label should read: **(PLEASE PRINT)** _____

Easter Plant Order Form

Once again we will be accepting orders for Easter plants. On Easter Sunday there will be a special insert in the bulletin noting who the plant is in honor of and who it's from. This is a wonderful way to pay tribute to a loved one, while also decorating our Church Sanctuary. Just complete the order form below and drop it in the offering plate when it's passed or mail to the church, 128 Central St., Auburn, MA 01501. Please submit your order form with payment **by Sunday, March 18th.**

Lilies (1 stem) \$10.00 _____

Lilies (2 stems) \$20.00 _____

Lilies (3 stems) \$30.00 _____

Tulips 6" \$10.00 _____ **8" \$18.00** _____

Color Choice: Yellow _____ Pink _____
 Red _____ White _____ Purple _____

6" Hyacinths \$10.00 _____
 Color Choice: blue _____ pink _____

8" Hydrangeas \$28.00 _____
 Color Choice: blue _____ pink _____

6" Pansies (mixed colors) \$7.00 _____

6" Martha Washington Geraniums \$13.00 _____

Color Choice: white _____ pink _____
 lavender _____ purple _____

**PLEASE COMPLETE DEDICATION IN
 SPACE PROVIDED ON BACK.**

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH'S SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATIONS ARE NOW AVAILABLE

Scholarship applications are now available on the table in Fellowship Hall. We have several scholarships we would like to award to church members seeking to continue their education. Specifically, there are two scholarships dedicated to those studying within the medical field, and one scholarship gives preference to those who are musically inclined and, of course, we have several unrestricted scholarships as well. Please complete the application form and return it to the Memorial/Scholarship Committee by April 15th.



YARD SALE to be held JUNE 16TH

Please save the date.

We will be needing your help for a short time on Friday, June 15th, at 6pm and again on Saturday the 16th at 1:30pm to carry tables out and back into the church. Spaces will be available to rent for only \$15.00 (\$20 for non-Church members). If you have questions, or to rent a space, call me, Cindy Dube, at 508-832-6646.



Yard Sale

QUOTES FOR THE MONTH

"If this is coffee, please bring me some tea; but if this is tea, please bring me some coffee." — Abraham Lincoln

"When they call the roll in the Senate, the senators do not know whether to answer 'present' or 'not guilty.'" — Theodore Roosevelt

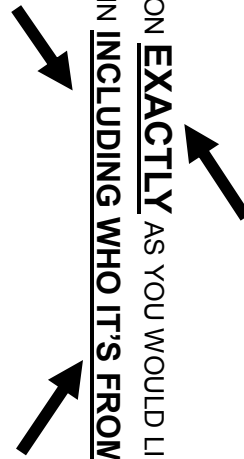
"I always figured the American public wanted a solemn ass for president, so I went along with them." —

Calvin Coolidge

↓ **Easter Flower Dedication** ↑
 ↓ **(PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY)** ↑

**Suggestion: Dedications may be In Memory of / In
 Celebration of/ for a special event, etc.**

PLEASE **PRINT** YOUR DEDICATION **EXACTLY** AS YOU WOULD LIKE
 IT TO APPEAR IN THE BULLETIN **INCLUDING WHO IT'S FROM.**



Name: (contact person) _____
Day Time Contact (phone and email): _____

**If you have questions, please call Michele Schillinger at
 508-259-2239 or the church office at 508-832-2845.**

TIDINGS is a monthly publication of

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

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

Web: auburnfirststucc.org



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