



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!’”

Ash Wednesday Service

Please plan to join us for our Ash Wednesday Service on February 6th at 7 p.m.

All Are Welcome

From the Pastor

Well, the annual meeting is past. The decisions are made. We are reorganized and ready to go. Now we start to live out our vision of what First Congregational Church can and should become. I think Rev. Peter Wells pointed us to a valuable insight when he was with us; we need to live in a vision of abundance and not a sense of scarcity. Truly this church is abundantly blessed by the inheritance from those who have gone before us, by talent, and potential leadership. We have to look beyond limitations to see how visualizing the abundance available to us can abundantly bless our mission and ministry and abundantly bless us.

Paul taught the same lesson to the church at Corinth (II Corinthians 9:6 -8).

We need to become exactly the church that God has planned and expected we can become. That will require some sacrifice of time, energy, and resources for the church, but the results will be more than worth it.

Rev. Dr. Kenneth E. Knox



Once again Allison Hill will be traveling to New Orleans as part of the “Teacher to Teacher” program during the February school vacation. This year there is a need for school supplies for both teachers and students (as is age and grade appropriate).

For teachers: assorted sizes of post its, red pens, scotch tape, masking tape, tacky material for hanging artwork on the walls, chalk, erasers, markers, sharpies, liquid white out, large scissors, white board markers and erasers, paper clips, staplers and staples, a small tool kit (especially screw drivers), glass slides for telescopes, and beakers.


For students: pencils, pencil sharpeners, erasers, crayons, blunt end scissors, rulers, protractors, compasses, colored pencils, highlighters, reinforcing circles for notebook paper, medium size sharp scissors.

Incentive items for students: Bookmarks (non-religious), fancy erasers, cute stamps and stamp pads for the teachers to use, map placemats—USA or world maps.

Please leave your donations in the box in Fellowship Hall. Allison will be leaving for New Orleans on February 16th and plans to pack the donations to bring onto the plane with her.

As always, there is a need for gift certificates for Home Depot, Lowes, Target, Walgreens or Sears (in \$25 increments please) to assist in the rebuilding effort and with personal needs.

If you have any questions please feel free to contact Allison at (508) 832 -4997. On behalf of the people of New Orleans, Allison would like to thank you for your support, generosity and compassion.



to
Donald & Carolyn
Slongwhite who
will be celebrating
their anniversary
on February 27th.

Coffee Hour Hosts

- 2/3 ~ Board of Ed
- 2/10, 2/17 ~ Library
- 2/24, 3/2 ~ Stewardship
- 3/9, 3/16 ~ Outreach
- 3/23 ~ Music
- 3/30 ~ Trustees

Our next church supper is planned for Saturday, February 16th, at 5:00p.m. and will feature barbeque chicken.

Adults \$8
Children \$4

Please plan to join us.

Congratulations go out to Grant and Emily Pattee on the recent birth of their son, Cole Gregory Pattee who made his appearance on December 21, 2007. May God richly bless you!



Rev. Knox's retirement in April is fast approaching. If you would like to bless him and Jackie with a monetary gift, you can make a check out to the church and mail it to Lori Stockhaus at 36 Linda Avenue, Millbury, MA 01527.



OUTREACH NEWS

Changing the world two by two. The Outreach Committee would like to start this new project by getting calendars and aid banks for families to fill. Hopefully by Easter (March 23rd) we will have at least \$160 to purchase 2 trios of bunnies and 2 flocks of chicks through Heifer International.

JOYFUL NOYSE REHEARSAL SCHEDULE:

Feb. 3, 10 & 17	11:15 a.m.
Feb. 24	9:15 a.m. <i>Jonah</i>
March 2, 9 & 16	11:15 a.m.
March 23	(Easter Sunday) <i>May You Have Peace</i>
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)

From The Board of Christian Education

Is it springtime already??

A farmer thinks of two seasons, springtime and harvest - renewal and result. For the Board of Christian Ed, this year will be right along those lines.

We enter the year needing to fill several critical personnel positions. We would like to thank Heather Zautner for her role as Director of Christian Education, a position she will be leaving this year. Heather has had to rebalance her many commitments in light of additional responsibilities at work. The committee will be placing ads in the local papers in an effort to fill this most important spot. We have already received a promising inquiry from one of our own members for this role.

We would also like to thank Jen Bohn and Judy Murphy for their long involvement in our Confirmation classes. They have shared their outlook on the Christian life and walked with the confirmands through many an on site and off site experience to help develop these young adults to a decision for Christ. Both Jen and Judy are more than deserving of some "R & R" from their work. These will certainly be large "shoes to fill".

As always, our Sunday School is a large part of what our committee SHOULD BE concerned about. We are in constant need of Sunday School teachers and volunteers. This has been the single largest downfall of our Sunday School program through recent years. Our children deserve a consistent message taught by a consistent staff. Anything less is simply unacceptable. The commitment of the Board of Christian Education should be to staff, support, and supply the needs of our Sunday School to become the best around.

In summary, our goals for this year need to be:

- 1) Secure a person to fill the paid position of Director of Christian Education and to fully support that person in their many responsibilities
- 2) Work alongside the Director of Christian Education to identify several people to act in the role of mentors for our Confirmation classes as needed
- 3) Staff, support, and supply the needs of our Sunday School to become the best around
- 4) Develop various surveys in order to better understand the expectations of the parents of our Sunday School students, as well as the educational needs of our adult congregation.

Certainly a short list, but none the less, an important and an achievable one.

Please pray for us, and with us, as we strive to reap the good fruits of the harvest.

Mike Schillinger, Chairman
Board of Christian Education

The Board of Deacons had their first meeting on January 24th. A new slate of officers were chosen. Judi Taft was voted in as Chairman, Pat Bukoski, Secretary, Louise Powers, Council Rep and Allison Hill as Co-Chair.

We look forward to a very busy year as we prepare for Holy Week and look for an interim minister to temporarily fill Ken's place upon his retirement on April 27th. Once again we will also be preparing and delivering Christmas baskets to shut ins, we'll meet with the Confirmation class to submit recommendations for membership to the Church Council, and the year will bring many other duties as well. We look forward to serving God and our Church to the best of our ability and if any members of the church have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact any member of the Board.



February is American Heart Month, with February 3rd being National Wear Red Day. It is National Wise Health Month, and National Children's Dental Health Month. February 1st is Give Kids a Smile Day. The 3rd-9th is National Burn Awareness Week. The 14th is National Donor Day, and the 24th-March 1st is Eating Disorders Awareness Week.

In line with American Heart Month, Dawn Murphy and I are sponsoring a CPR class here at the church. It will be Feb 11 & Feb. 25, 7:00p.m.-9:00p.m. The 11th will be infants and children and the 25th will be adults. The cost is \$25.00 for one, or both for \$40.00. Pam Sheeran from UMass Memorial's Family Education will be teaching the classes. The classes are limited to 15. Sign up in Fellowship Hall. If there is a need, we will try to book some more classes with Pam.

I have 2 babysitting classes scheduled with Pam. They are the Tuesday and Wednesday of February school vacation (2/19 and 2/20) and also the April vacation (4/22 and 4/23). They will be 10:00a.m. to 2:30p.m. with ½ hour for lunch. You can call Pam at 508-334-5474 to register.

I also want to call to your attention ICE - In Case of Emergency! We all carry cell phones with names and numbers stored in its memory, but nobody, other than ourselves, knows which of these numbers belong to our closest family or friends. If we were to be involved in an accident or were taken ill, the people attending to us would have our phone but wouldn't know who to call. All you need to do is store the number of a contact person or persons who should be contacted during emergency situations under the name "ICE" (in case of emergency). For more than one contact person, enter ICE1, ICE2, etc. Please do this and pass this on to your friends. This could save lives and a lot of time!

Have a Heart Healthy Month,

Debbie Pranaitis, Parish Nurse

From The Nominating Committee

At the time of the Annual Meeting of First Congregational Church held on January 19th 2008, the Nominating Committee had filled all the open committee slots with the exception of 2 positions, one on the Board of Deacons and one on the Music Committee.

It is with great pleasure that we can now come to you and say that those two slots have been filled as well! Our Church has been wonderfully blessed with members coming forward offering up their talents to assist in the upcoming year(s).

If you are volunteering on a committee and your personal circumstances are altered in such a way as you cannot fulfill your obligations as you had originally intended, please see one of the committee members below so that we can take your resignation to the Council and begin to find a replacement for you.

The close of 2007 has brought the end of Carole Murray's tenure. Michele Schillinger and Katherine (Kay) Shapter will join Marion Woodcock in 2008.

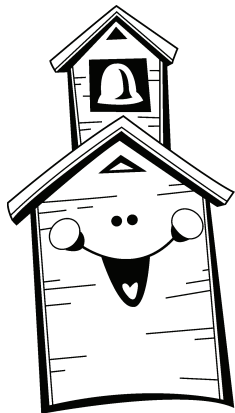
Thank you all for your commitment to First Congregational Church in Auburn.

In His Love,

The 2008 Nominating Committee

Marion Woodcock, Michele Schillinger and Kay Shapter

Here We Grow Preschool



Happy Valentine's Day to all. As of this writing New England has already had a cold winter. I say enough is enough.

Looking towards the month of February, *Here We Grow* will be very busy. Our Valentine parties will be on February 13th & 14th. The children will have the opportunity to be "mail carriers" and share cards with all their friends. The parents also supply the classes with yummy snacks.

Here We Grow will be running its last fundraiser for this school year. It will be Yankee Candle and we will run it February 4-26. If you need or *want* anything I will leave a booklet with Denise in the church office. Thank You for your support. With this fundraiser, the school usually makes close to \$4,000.00. All monies earned go toward field trips, special programs offered throughout the year, equipment for the classrooms, and enrichment classes offered to the children (yoga, music, & aerobics). Profit from our second fundraiser, (Avon & Tastefully Simple) was just about \$1,300.00. We are very lucky to have two HWG parents who sell these products. They were very helpful with organizing and running this fundraiser. SO thanks to Tricia Gervais & Sally Gagnon. If anyone from the church needs Avon or Tastefully Simple, there are books downstairs to order from.

The school will be closed for winter break from 2/18-2/22. Wishing I was going to Florida, but I will settle for just nice weather. Hope everyone has special days with their children over this vacation.

I am writing this month's Tidings at a late date, sorry Denise. I do have a good reason. During the month of January, I was averaging 5 to 6 visits each week from interested families and was, therefore, very busy. After awhile I felt like a tape recorder repeating everything to the families that visited. Open House was set for January 31, in the morning. At that time *Here We Grow* had a few spots left for the upcoming school year of '08-'09. Our total enrollment for next year will be 134 children. As of this writing we have 116 spots filled and 18 spots available. We also have a few three year old children on wait lists for the morning session. We do have a larger enrollment for next year since *Here We Grow* will be *growing* once more. With permission from the Board of Trustees and Board of Education of FCC, the school will be using one more classroom next year. During the week we will offer a 5-day program for four year olds and on the weekend the Sunday School will use the same classroom for their 3-4-5 year old Sunday School children. This will allow us to offer a 5-day program in the small classroom, (formerly cradle roll) with 1 teacher and 8 children. After we announced this to the HWG parents, the room was filled in one day. SO keep us in your thoughts and wish us luck with this new adventure.

Until next month, stay warm and be healthy.

Dawn Murphy, Director, *Here We Grow* Preschool

We are planning a 5 week study of the Gospel of Luke and Acts (both are written by Luke) to run February 13th through March 12th (2/13, 2/20, 2/27, 3/5 and 3/12).

We are offering both morning and evening sessions in an attempt to accommodate more people's schedules.

Wednesdays 9:30 - 10:45 a.m. or 7:00 - 8:30 p.m.

We need a minimum of 5 people to commit to each session to enable viable discussion. Please sign-up before Ash Wednesday (Feb. 6th). Forms to sign-up are located in Fellowship Hall.



Library Tidings
By Gloria Whitehead



We're one month into a new year and hoping that you're off to a good start - good health and good reading to all.

Some members of the sanctuary renovation committee have also put some big plans, which include the library, in motion. The bookcases and removed books are scheduled to be moved out of the sanctuary June 1st, and, without any hitches, will be back in place in September. What can we offer our faithful borrowers whom we do not want to lose in between time? Our minds aren't blank, but we know that there are creative thinkers in this congregation and we seriously request your ideas along with those of our readers. There'll be a pen and pad on the sign out stand in the adult library. Just jot down your idea, tear off the sheet and drop it in the top drawer, or tell a committee member; and, now, to books.

People by Peter Spier - it's for all ages, it measures 10¹/₄" x 15¹/₄" x 1/2" and on the back side, top of the 2nd page it reads, "In many ways the saying 'know thyself' is not well said. It were more practical to say 'know other people'." Menander, 343-292, Greek poet. This spectacular picture book presents a world of more than four billion people with illustrations and humor and the fantastic number of differences of it all. Don't miss this outstanding composition of people and places et al. by a world famous author/illustrator. Come a bit early for church, take the book from the adult table display, sit in Florence's chair and skip around the world—all before a Sunday service, or TAKE IT HOME.

The Age of Turbulence by Alan Greenspan - Alan Greenspan introduces his book as partially a detective story in which he tries to understand the gist of this new world, how we reached what we're now living through, and what lies ahead. Divided into halves, in the first half he tries to present the arc of his learning curve and, from this, in the second half tries to build an understanding of the global economy. This all leads to his guesstimate of what will make up the world economy in 2030. It's not a book to pick up after a tough day at work, but it will be a personal and intellectual legacy of Alan Greenspan.

You're probably familiar with Jon Keller, political analyst of WBZ-TV fame. *The Blue State* was hot on the list before Christmas and leaping further back. Massachusetts was reputed to be the intellectual center of the United States. We still hear of Taxachusetts, of doomed political candidates, save JFK. Keller goes beyond urban deterioration and other problems shared by other states to, "What's gone wrong with the Massachusetts Democratic Party?" He also tells his theory of what caused the collapse of the Mass Miracle into the Mass Miasma.

And last, but not least, from the children's library . . .

Why Do People Pray? by Jean H. Richards Ages 4-8

This book answers the questions many little people ask about prayer - to ask for things or to thank God for good things, to ask God for help for others or oneself. This book was written because children do wonder and they do gradually learn to thank God in various ways; to thank God for the good world he planned and all that is in it.

From The Stewardship Committee

The Annual Meeting of First Congregational Church was held on January 19th 2008. At this meeting, it was with great pleasure that we, the Stewardship Committee, were able to announce that we had received a total of \$130,741 from 143 pledge receipts for our 2008 Pledge drive. Although the final tally was less, and from fewer pledges than our 2007 campaign, we still consider the 2008 campaign a success. Given the state of the economy at this time, we are grateful we were able to hit within 96% of our 2007 campaign figure.

.....*but don't let that stop you from doing more if you can!* We still need to try and meet our 2008 budget! Let's strive to make our Church "whole" in 2008.

Put your faith and trust in God...He WILL provide!!

As you know, one of our responsibilities as a member of this Church is to give through the annual Stewardship Campaign for support of the Church and its benevolence. Our annual pledges provide for the operation of the Church and Church life as well as for the future of our Church, its members and children, and its many ministries both within and outside Auburn. Without the support of each and every one of you, whether it's through your time, your talents or, most importantly, your treasures, our Church would not be successful in all that we need to do. We owe our success to each and every member of this Church.

Thank you all for your commitment to First Congregational Church in Auburn.

Donna Dube and Al Boucher have completed their terms on the Stewardship Committee and wish Todd Dube, Mike Dube, Steve and Sandy Landry along with the incoming members, Michele Schillinger and Ron Klaucke, much success in 2008!

Stay tuned for a new Stewardship theme to unfold over the next few months! As has been the case in the last couple of years, the Stewardship Publication will continue to arrive with your Tidings. Stay tuned for some new and exciting messages from Stewardship and your Stewardship Committee. It is going to be an exciting new year ahead!!

In His Love,

The Outgoing 2007 Stewardship Committee

Donna Dube (Chair), Todd Dube, Steve and Sandy Landry, Al Boucher, and Mike Dube

Remembering Our Troops

We have decided to send packages to Iraq at the beginning of every month. So please continue to collect items to ship to SPC Fred Orcutt and his comrades. 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.

SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATIONS

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

Applications are due by April 15th.

Due to Rev. Knox's pending retirement, a pastoral search committee will soon be appointed by the Church Council. Anyone interested in serving on this committee (or who thinks that they know of someone who might be a good candidate) should submit their name, or the name of that person, in writing to the Church Council.

Stu Campbell
Council President

YOM and Confirmation Class News

The confirmation class spent 24 hours with the homeless of Boston on January 25th participating in the CITY REACH program run by Ecclesia ministries. Included in the program was an outdoor tour showing some of what the homeless encounter on the streets of Boston. We also distributed the clothes we collected here at the church. I think it was an eye opening experience for our youth. We thank everyone who made a donation.

The confirmation class will be in charge of this year's sunrise service on Easter. We hope that you will join us for the service and then breakfast at the Heritage coffee shop. This has become sort of a tradition for the youth and anyone who wants to join us.

YOM has set the date for this year's auction and luncheon. The auction is scheduled for Sunday, April 6th. There will be a traditional pasta and meatball dinner served at 1:00 with LIVE bidding beginning at 2:00 sharp. As always we are looking for donations. Some of the items that do particularly well are tickets to sporting events or theatre, use of a vacation home, GENTLY used quality furniture, etc. Please see any YOM member if you are interested in making a donation.

YOM has already scheduled our summer mission trip. This year we will be heading to Asheville, NC. The dates are Saturday, July 19th, through Sunday, July 27th. The fundraising for this year's trip has already begun and will be no small feat. We need to raise a minimum of \$10,000! We do realize that we are asking a lot of our church family so we ask that you get friends and neighbors involved. Bring someone to the auction; show someone outside of church our fundraising brochures. I know we can reach this lofty goal if **everyone** pitches in. If you are interested in joining us, it's not too late to get involved! Our next meeting is Sunday, February 10th, after church.

We are very lucky to have Kyle Dube going with us this year as our adult chaperone. Kyle is the owner of Project Plus Builders and has been a licensed contractor for over 18 years. His expertise in building and remodeling is only secondary to his love of family and friends. We are SO pleased that Kyle has agreed to join us this summer. Feel free to "check him out" at www.ProjectPlusBuilders.com.

Thank you and God Bless!
Jennifer & Randy Bohn

TIDINGS is a monthly publication of

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Web: auburnfirstucc.org



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