

2010

2010

JANUARY



# 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!’”*

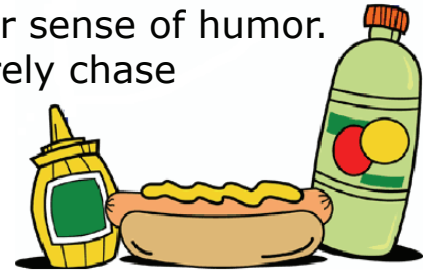
**June in January Sat. January 16th at 5 pm \$10.00**

**Church Supper Shortcake and Barbershop Quartet Performance**



Menu includes: Hamburgers and Hot Dogs and Strawberry Shortcake with homemade biscuits, native berries picked at Silvermine Farm in Sutton and fresh cream from Cooper’s Farm in Leicester —a real taste of summer. New this year: the Four Get Me Notes - Don, Dave, Bob and Tom will be entertaining us with songs and their sense of humor.

This is a night not to be missed and will surely chase away those January doldrums.



## **Different Children, Different Needs Workshop Monday, March 29th at 7 P.M. in Fellowship Hall**

“Children are not things to be molded, but people to be unfolded.” This workshop, hosted by Here We Grow Preschool and the Here We Grow Board, will explore the unique pattern of influence upon a child’s behavior and development with particular detail on the inherited temperament. Together, we will explore the concept of “goodness of fit” between the child’s traits and those of the adult caregiver.

This workshop is uplifting, empowering, and fun and is being offered to Here We Grow families and First Congregational Church members.

### **Important Notice for all Officers & Committee Members:**

**The Annual Meeting** will be held here on **Saturday, January 16th at 2 p.m.**

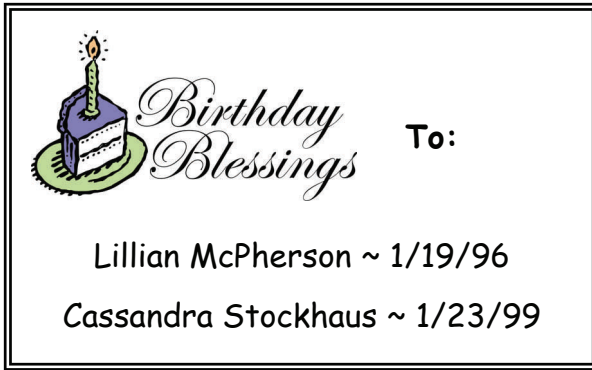
**The All Committee Meeting** will be on **Tuesday, Jan. 19th at 7 p.m.** and the **Installation of Officers and Committees** will be during the **Jan. 24th worship service.**



### **Coffee Hour Hosts**

- 1/3 ~ Trustees
- 1/10 ~ Deacons
- 1/17 ~ Outreach





### 2010 Offering Envelopes

Please pick up your 2010 offering envelopes located at the church in the back of the Sanctuary. If you can't find your envelopes, it means you did not make a pledge or didn't indicate that you wanted envelopes. Please see Lori or Nick Stockhaus with any questions.

December 11, 2009

Outreach Committee  
The First Congregational Church in Auburn  
128 Central Street at Church Street  
Auburn, MA 01501-2820

**DISMAS**  **S**  
H O U S E

Dear Friends at the First Congregational Church in Auburn.

On behalf of the residents, staff and board of Dismas House of Massachusetts, I would like to express our deepest gratitude for your recent donation of \$7,000 to help launch the new Dismas Family Farm, and I would like to thank you for taking the time to visit our new program in Oakham.

At Dismas, we strive to provide lasting opportunities for employment, housing and community to promote healthy reintegration at Dismas House on Richards Street and at the Father John Brooks House, a permanent, supportive housing program for Dismas graduates and their families. Each year, Dismas House touches the lives of 100 men, women and children through our programs and services. The Dismas Family Farm is our newest opportunity to help reconnect former prisoners with the fabric of society.

This year has presented challenges to Dismas House, as we have adjusted to the loss of considerable state funding, and the subsequent closure of the state-funded Almost Home Program. But as one door closes, another opens. After years of planning, we are delighted to open the Dismas Family Farm, a holistic, rehabilitative and vocational reentry model. Your support is helping Dismas sustain our mission and making the farm a reality.

Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at (508) 799-9389. Again, thank you for your support and happy holidays!

In Peace,

Colleen Hilferty  
Co-Executive Director

### By Another Road

Reflections from your Interim Pastor, Rev. Mark Seifried

*And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod,  
they left for their own country by another road. – excerpted from Matthew 2:1-12*

During Epiphany, the season in the church that begins twelve days after Christmas and extends to Lent, we are reminded of the Magi who were prompted to follow a star to a distant land to witness the extraordinary birth of Christ. There is much we miss from this story if we listen only to tradition. First is that the magi were not three kings as our carols and traditions claim, but rather scholars versed in medicine, philosophy, astronomy, astrology, divination, and magic. They spent their lives studying and passing information along to others. These sophisticated men would have been like MIT scholars visiting Pigeon Forge, Tennessee. They would have seemed out of place in the hick town of Bethlehem.

In his poem "Journey of the Magi," T. S. Eliot powerfully renders one of the magi's ponderings many years after the journey to Bethlehem. He remembers the frigid cold, obstinate camels, hostile cities, dirty villages with high prices, and finally finding the place not a moment too soon. The question still resonating in his mind is:

*[W]ere we led all that way for Birth or Death?*

**At the thought, he comments:**

*There was a Birth certainly...[but] this Birth was  
Hard and bitter agony for us, like Death, our death.*

*We returned to our places ...*

*But no longer at ease here, in the old dispensation,*

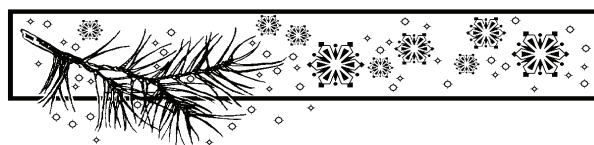
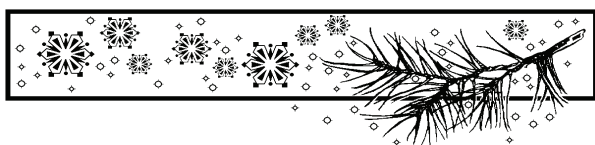
*With an alien people clutching their gods.*

*...I should be glad of another death.*

He was no longer at ease in the world. The journey to Bethlehem, both interior and exterior, changes everything-- alters his world view and his belief system so profoundly that this "man of the world" feels like an alien in his own home. Still, the grace-filled transformation leads him to say he would be glad of another such "death."

So it goes in the life of Christ. As Dr. Pat Saxon says, "When we go traveling with God, we are asked to shed the cumbersome baggage we have accumulated, shed false selves and old attachments to get closer and closer to the Divine Essence within. This letting go often feels like a death of sorts until the new identity, the new creation in Christ is more firmly established." Indeed, as Christians, if we are truly at home in Christ, we perceive a world filled with false gods - a world we find contemptible at times . . . although, sadly, we must embrace some of its absurd dispensation if we are to survive.

Even as we yearn for new life in our world, in our community and in our church, let us embrace the death of our false selves and old attachments, in the arms of our God . . . losing our life to find it! With the help of God ALL THINGS are possible. New life is even probable when we are willing to embrace that sort of death.





Happy New Year to all! I pray for peace and good health for all of you!

January is Cervical Health Awareness Month, National Birth Defects Prevention Month (March of Dimes), Thyroid Awareness Month, Glaucoma Awareness Month, and National Radon Action Month. Jan 4th - 10th is National Folic Acid Awareness Week. I will have information on these subjects on the health table in Fellowship Hall.

God Bless!

Debbie Pranaitis  
Parish Nurse

(We received the following thank you notes in response to the Deacons' Christmas Baskets.)

*Thank you so much  
for the lovely Christmas  
basket.*

*It was nice that you  
thought of me.*

*Gloria Rose*

*Just a note  
to thank you  
for your kindness.*

*George and I want to  
thank you for the  
"goodie" basket you  
gave us. It is very much  
appreciated*

*Grace + George DuVerger*

To the Deacons,

What a delightful surprise to get a basket of so many homemade goodies and luscious candies. It was so much fun to open and to explore.

The enclosed check, if possible, should be directed to a youth activity that meant so much to my daughter, Lori.

Thank you,  
Madeline Westerback

(The generous donation will be used towards the Jr. Youth Group's retreat this month.)



*Happy New Year from **Here We Grow** Preschool*

*Another year has come and gone and we welcome 2010. With the New Year here, it's obvious we've made it through the holidays and all the hustle and bustle that goes with it. Hopefully, you all had a wonderful Christmas.*

*During the month of December, **Here We Grow** once again ran a successful Toys for Tots campaign. As in the past, the children and families were very generous, giving gifts to those less fortunate. What a great concept for the children to learn, "the act of giving to others." This is one small way **Here We Grow** continues as an outreach program of First Congregational Church of Auburn.*

*Our holiday programs were held on December 21<sup>st</sup> & 22<sup>nd</sup> with a visit from Santa; thanks Bob Murray. The children did a great job on stage singing a variety of holiday songs. Once again the 4-year-olds sang and signed "Happy Birthday" to Baby Jesus. After the program on December 21<sup>st</sup>, the staff enjoyed their holiday luncheon at the "Pic," and swapped gifts with each other.*

*As of this writing I am still working on our fourth annual report to NAEYC. It seems to consume a great deal of my time. I will report any updates after I hear from them.*

*We are busy preparing for the upcoming school year of 2010-2011. We continue to have visitors at the preschool checking us out for next year. **Here We Grow** will be hosting an "Open House" on February 10, 2010 from 1:00-2:30. This time is for any new families looking for a preschool for their child.*

*With the holiday break over and done, I feel we can all settle down for the winter ahead and enjoy the rest of the school year of 2010. Until February, stay warm.*

*Sincerely,  
Dawn Murphy  
**Here We Grow** Preschool Director*

The following was taken from a recent Interfaith Hospitality newsletter:

Thank you to all who participated in our Octane for October campaign, which to date has raised \$3,393! Congratulations to First Congregational in Auburn - They were the first congregation to sell 10 gas cards and return their \$250 to the IHN Day Center, making Rev. Mark Seifried the winner of the "over the top" deluxe car wash provided by the IHN Advisory Board! Congratulations to Mark and thank you to all who participated in this fundraising event to provide gas for the IHN van. And remember, funding for transportation costs is something we need help with year round. If you would like to help provide gas for the IHN van or help cover the cost for renting the moving truck on Sundays, please send a check made out to IHN transportation fund and mail it to 114 Main Street, Worcester, MA 01608. Thank you!

### A message from your Stewardship Committee...

The Stewardship Committee would like to take a moment to thank all of you who have committed a portion of your treasures to First Congregational Church in response to our 2010 campaign pledge. In an effort to assist our Church in reducing expenses, please accept this as a formal "Thank You" for your participation. If, at this time, you still have not yet responded with your pledge for 2010, please take a moment to fill out the pledge card and return it to the church office, even if you cannot make a pledge at this time.

During this glorious holiday season, we ask the Congregation for its support and continued prayers during this critical time of need in our church and we pray that God will provide for us in the upcoming year just as He has in 2009. We are reminded that we are not solely responsible for our successes in life; God provides all of us with our talents and treasures and we sometimes forget that it is He who makes all things possible in our lives.

Happy New Year to you and yours and may the Lord continue to bless each and every one of you.

In His Love,

Your Stewardship Committee: Ron Klaucke (Chair), Mike Dube and Michele Schillinger

On December 6th we celebrated the baptism of Michael Edwin Saari. Michael is the 5 month old son of Michael and Leah Saari. We pray that God will guide and keep Michael and bless his family.



Congratulations go out to the Woodcock and Perry

Families on the recent birth of Caylee Marie Perry on November 30th. Caylee weighed 7 lbs., 4 oz. at birth. She is the daughter of Caitlin and Mark Perry and granddaughter to Charles and Karen Woodcock. Her proud great-grandparents are Don and Marion Woodcock.

Congratulations to Kelly and Christopher O'Hara on the birth of their daughter, Alyssa Kayden O'Hara born on December 22, 2009. Alyssa's birth weight was 6lbs. 9oz and she was 19 3/4 inches long. Her proud grandmother is Dorothy Woodcock and great-grandparents are Don & Marion Woodcock.

Blessings to all of you!!!

### Tidings 2010

#### Subscription Renewal Form

In an effort to offset the costs of publishing the Monthly *Tidings*, we are asking for members and friends to support a voluntary subscription. Your participation is entirely optional and will not affect whether or not you receive the *Tidings*.

Annual Renewal - (10 issues, no July or Aug. issue)

Please enclose a check or money order for \$10 payable to: **First Congregational Church**.

Please write "**Tidings**" in the memo section

Mail to: First Congregational Church  
128 Central St., Auburn, MA 01501

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

*Thank You!*

*Kenneth W. Chaffee has moved in with his son, James Chaffee, at 11 Orchard Street, Marlboro, MA 01752. He may be reached by mail, or by telephone at (508) 485-5771. He would enjoy visits or mail. On behalf of my father and our family, we thank you for your love and care for him.*

*Yours in Christ,  
Jeffrey L. Chaffee*

## Library Tidings by Gloria Whitehead

Do you need a new calendar to start the New Year? If so, please help yourself to one from the library table. If you have extras, you are welcome to add them to the pile of calendars.

Next – good friends said they missed the *Upper Room* being available in the Adult Library. We'll try to have them available there as well as the table in Fellowship Hall. Abbie Wiley quietly used to pay for the whole church order of the *Upper Room* for years. There is a wooden box in which contributions can be placed located in the narthex (back) of the sanctuary on the library table. Your donations are gratefully received.

And a final important reminder regarding missing or overdue books...some may not have been signed out. All church library books should have a First Congregational Church stamp on one of the inside front pages of the book. This applies to Children's and Adult books. Would you please have everyone in your household give a serious look – if only just once a year. Problems? We are understanding.

## THAT'S IT ON THE MUNDANE.

Abraham Lincoln almost seems to have come alive more recently through a variety of media sources. It was mentioned that he is the outstanding biographical subject in recent years. With February easily recognized as his birthday, I thought it might be interesting for some of you to know about *Lincoln's Mothers*. It's a story of Nancy and Sally Lincoln. Don't flinch. You know how influential mothers can be. As a matter of fact, "All that I am," said Lincoln, "I owe to my angel mother." "Which mother?" he was once asked. "Both," he replied.

Apparently Tom Lincoln had made a very appropriate choice in his first wife, Nancy Hanks. Their lifestyle necessitated moving from state or farm to farm with difficulty. It was a very hard life, but they seemed happily bonded. Tom and Nancy had fallen in love at a tender age and had three children: Sarah (Sally) Bush, named after a close family friend, Abraham, and Thomas, who did not survive infancy. Each night Nancy would read the Bible and encourage Abraham to learn, recognizing that his potential exceeded farming. However, life was such a strain on Nancy that she died when Abe was 9.

Sally Bush and Tom Lincoln were married a year later and, in contrast, Sally was unable to read or write. However, she so encouraged her stepson to his full potential that he continued to achieve right up to be President.

Filled with inspiration, dedication, and love, this is an inspiring story.



*Dearest sisters and brothers in Christ,*

*Thank you so much for your yuletide generosity. The money has helped me replace a leaky kitchen faucet at home and get a new pair of sneakers, plus more books. Additionally, the cards, notes, goodies, and gift certificates topped Christmas off for me and gave me many good reasons to count my blessings for my ministry among such gracious, generous, and loving people of God. May we all find God's favor and presence throughout the New Year, 2010.*

*Your brother on the journey,  
Pastor Mark Seifried*

**FROM THE DIRECTOR OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

Happy New Year! I trust you all had a wonderful Christmas surrounded with good memories.

The pageant will be on January 3 immediately following the service. So take your coffee and treat, grab a seat, and sit back and enjoy *Live from the Streets of Bethlehem* .

The Jr.Youth Group will be heading off to Monadnock Bible Conference Center January 8 -10 for a middle school encounter weekend. It should be a wonderful experience for all. Thank you to the Bohns for assisting in chaperoning.

We are looking for a teacher for the Pre K -grade 2 class and also cradle roll for Feb -June. I would like to thank Shirley Hill for teaching the first half of the year and Michele Schillinger and Karen Wheeler for taking cradle roll for December and January. If you have any questions about cradle roll, the curriculum, or the Pre K -2 class, feel free to talk to Shirley or me.

Blessings to all of you,  
 Jean McPherson  
 Director of Religious Education

*TIDINGS is a monthly publication of*

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

Phone: (508) 832-2845

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

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