



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!'"

FROM THE PASTOR

As I write this, it is the day before the end of the Mayan calendar, and a week after the tragedy in Newtown, Connecticut. Things are in turmoil. I heard that Homeland Security spent money on a plan in case zombies attack! I hear sports radio hosts talking about buying emergency meals in bulk at Costco. People are worried. Why?

There were dire predictions of what would happen if Obama was elected. There were dire predictions of what would happen if Romney was elected. Television news (maybe all news) sells fear. CNN and Fox News had their best ratings right after 9/11, when the whole nation was in shock and panic. If I think life is good, I skip the news channels. Only when there is a storm coming or some big tragedy do I tune in. Bad, scary news is profitable for the news industry. As I write this, Newtown is begging the news people for some peace and decorum. Will they get it?

In all of this talk of the end, in all the fear, we forget the signs of new life. Violence and crime of all types are down from the highs of the 1980's and 90's. The poorest American is richer and healthier than even the richest person was 1000 years ago. Yet are we happier? Probably not.

A researcher found that if you give a child a gift, that child is happier than if you give that child a choice of gifts and then give them the preferred gift. It seems the child questions whether what she/he got was really the "best" choice. By choosing, some doubt comes in to dampen the child's happiness. In America we have lots of choices and our kids have choices we never had; soccer versus Scouts; baseball versus swimming lessons. The choices are endless and researchers tell us that with choice comes worry and regret.

I am sure the world will not end soon. Neither Mayans, zombies, or mass killers worry me much. What worries me is how happy and blessed we all could feel, and yet . . . sorrow, worry, and regret prevail.

I think our ability to overlook the blessings we receive is best expressed in the words of a song.

Count your blessings, name them one by one,
Count your blessings, see what God has done!
Count your blessings, name them one by one,
And it will surprise you what the Lord has done.

I wish you a blessed New Year and may you feel blessed.

- Pastor Brian

Happy New Year ♪ *Happy New Year* ♪ *Happy New Year*



Important Notice for all Officers & Committee Members:

The Annual Meeting will be held here on **Saturday, January 19th at 3 p.m.** (All committee/board end of year reports are due to the church office by January 2nd.) The **Installation of Officers and Committees** will be during worship on **January 20th.** The **All Committee Meeting** will be on **Tuesday, January 22nd at 7 p.m.**

Coffee Hour Hosts

- 1/6, 1/13 ~ Trustees
- 1/20 ~ Music Committee

Please note: a new coffee hour schedule will be handed out at the All Committee Meeting on Tuesday, January 22nd at 7 p.m.

2013 Offering Envelopes

Please pick up your 2013 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.

Happy Birthday to:

- Lillian McPherson ~ 1/19/96
- Cassandra Stockhaus ~ 1/23/99

Happy Birthday!



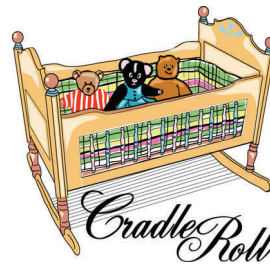
Please notify the church office if you would like to have your special occasion noted in the *Tidings*. Please call 508-832-2845 with your birthday/ anniversary information.

Alice Carlson would like to express her heartfelt appreciation to the Deacons and church members for the lovely Christmas basket.

“I enjoyed the basket very much and appreciate how you think of those who can’t come to church.”

CRADLE ROLL ROTATION:

- | | |
|-------------------|-------------------|
| 1/6 Jennifer Bohn | 1/13 Linda Hardy |
| 1/20 Shirley Hill | 1/27 Judy Murphy |
| 2/3 Cynthia Dube | 2/10 Sue Campbell |



January Sermon Topics:

- 1/6 "Eureka! I Found It!"
- 1/13 (Pastor will be away. Cliff Peterson will share.)
- 1/20 "Are You Wheat or Chaff?"
- 1/27 "Conversion"

Children's Sermons:

- "Everyone Comes Home"
(Garry Mahlert will share.)
- "Do You Have the Holy Spirit?"
- "Are You Questioned?"

Community Supper ~ Saturday, January 19th at 4 p.m.

Please join us for a delicious roast beef supper on

January 19th at 4 p.m. ~ Adults \$10 Children \$5

Please note the earlier start time.

(We're hoping the earlier start time of 4 p.m. will draw members to stay for supper following the annual meeting at 3 p.m.) Of course, we welcome community members as well!

We hope to see you there!



Happy New Year!

January is National Birth Defects Prevention Month, National Radon Action Month, National Glaucoma Awareness Month, and Thyroid Awareness Month. January 6th-12th is National Folic Acid Awareness Week, and the 28th- February 3rd is National Drug Facts Week.

I have information about medical alert systems that Doug Brothers installs and services. Take a brochure from the table in Fellowship Hall, or see Doug if you have any questions. These are great for people that live alone! It is a great gift idea, perhaps an early Mother's Day or Father's Day gift, or just peace of mind for family members!

Some church members have volunteered to provide transportation to doctor appointments. If you need a ride, please see me. Also, if you need medical equipment; i.e., walkers, tub seats, wheelchairs, etc., please check the closet on the first floor just inside the entrance of the educational wing. Items come and go, so if it's there and you need it, please help yourself.

My last comment is: **hand washing!** It's that time of the year, when good hand washing can help prevent the passing of cold and flu germs.

God Bless!

Debbie Pranaitis
Parish Nurse
cell: 508-612-4521



The Reverend Dr. Carl F. Schultz, Jr., a leading pastor of the United Church of Christ, went to eternal life on Monday, Dec. 3, 2012, in Hartford surrounded by the love of his family. He was 80. Rev. Schultz was born in Hyannis, MA, the only son of Reverend Dr. Carl F. Schultz and Janet Schultz. He leaves his wife of 57 years, Della M. (MacAskill) Schultz. On October 4, 1959, Rev. Schultz was ordained to the Christian Ministry in the Plymouth Congregational Church in Plymouth, NH. After serving 3 years at Plymouth Church, he was called to become the pastor of First Congregational Church in Auburn, MA, where he served from 1962 to 1968. During his time in Auburn, Rev. Schultz was part-time Director of the Worcester Council of Churches Pastoral Committee, an elected member to the Auburn School Committee and active in the civil rights and ecumenical movement.

For 34 years, Rev. Schultz served as Senior Pastor of First Church of Christ Congregational, in Glastonbury. Following his retirement from First Church, he served for over 2 years as the Interim Senior Pastor at historic Old South Church in Boston. Rev. Schultz graduated cum laude from Tufts University in 1956 and was awarded a Master of Divinity degree from Andover Newton Theological Seminary in 1959. In 1986, Rev. Schultz earned a Doctor of Ministry from the Hartford Seminary. A memorial service was held on December 8 at the First Church of Christ in Glastonbury. The Mulryan Funeral Home handled arrangements.

Please pray for the Schultz family during this time of loss.

Surrounded by his loving family, **Carl H. Johnson, Jr.**, 85, passed away Thursday, December 6 at Life Care Center in Auburn. He leaves behind his wife of 63 years, Lorain (Fletcher) Johnson; his daughter Karen Wojcik and her husband Theodore of Auburn; his daughter Lynn Shaw of Worcester; his son Carl "Skip" Johnson and his wife Jean of Holden; his daughter Paula Woelfel and her husband Frank of Millbury; his son Alan Johnson of Auburn; his son William Johnson and his wife Lauri of Harvard; and his daughter Laurel Post and her husband Gary of Douglas; 13 grandchildren and 1 great grandchild. He also leaves a sister, Brenda Morrow, and her husband Ronald of Holden, a brother, Robert Johnson, and his wife, Barbara, of Rutland, and several nieces and nephews. He was predeceased by a brother, Ronald "Kenneth" Johnson, and sister, Marjorie Meni Cutch.

Carl was born in Hyde Park, MA on February 22, 1927 the son of Carl H. Johnson, Sr. and Doris Tanner. He attended Boys Trade School of Worcester and later enlisted in the Army. He worked at Crompton & Knowles, Wyman Gordon and was an Auburn police officer for 34 years. Carl was a past master of Joel H. Prouty Lodge of Masons in Auburn from 1990-1991, and held numerous roles in the Masons including Past Master of Sixth Lodge of Instruction, Worcester Scottish Rite, and Connecticut Valley Consistory. He was a long time secretary of the Auburn Charitable Association. He was president and an assistant coach of the Auburn American Little League for many years. He was also a member of the Auburn Town Council and an avid church member of the First Congregational Church of Auburn. Carl was an accomplished woodworker. A memorial service was held Monday, December 10, 2012, at the First Congregational Church, Auburn, MA. In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to the Shriners Hospital, 516 Carew Street, Springfield, MA 01104 or the First Congregational Church, 128 Central Street, Auburn.

Carl will be greatly missed by his church family. Please be in prayer for his loved ones.

Church Member, **Evelyn (Holden) Knowlton**, age 94, died on Friday, Dec. 21, 2012. Evelyn was a former resident of Auburn, and more recently resided at Autumn Village in Worcester. She was the wife of the late Everett Knowlton, and leaves her daughter, Diane Knowlton of Worcester. Evelyn also leaves many nieces and nephews including Judy Bjork, Shirley Hill, and Cindy Dube. A full obituary was not available at the time of this printing.

Please keep Evelyn's family and loved ones in your prayers at this time.



We are looking for a back-up person who is available to shovel snow during mornings this winter. If interested, please speak with a Trustee (Cindy Dube, Todd Dube, Paul Gemme, Stan MacPhee, Bob Murray, or Judi Taft).



Here We Grow Preschool Welcomes in the New Year



Another year has come and gone and we begin 2013 with renewed enthusiasm. We successfully sang our way through the holidays and are now looking forward to settling in for a long, beautiful winter. Hopefully, you and your families had a wonderful Christmas and are looking forward to the New Year and what it has to offer.

During the month of December, *Here We Grow*, in conjunction with the Auburn Police Department, ran a collection of toys & items for ages infant to 16 years old. As in the past, the children and families were very generous with their donations of toys, games, books, and other items for the older ones. This is one small way *Here We Grow* continues as an educational outreach program of First Congregational Church of Auburn.

Our holiday programs were held on December 20th and 21st with visits from Santa (thank you, Pastor Brian). The 3 and 5-day classes 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." Our 2-day programs were done a little differently this year. Our goal was to avoid the anxiety some children have about getting on stage and performing. We did mini programs in the vestry with just a few family members attending. After the program on December 21st, the staff enjoyed their holiday luncheon and swapped gifts with each other.

We are busy preparing for the upcoming school year of 2013-2014. Visits will start in January with prospective new students and families. *Here We Grow* will be hosting an **open house** on March 6, 2013 from 12:30-2:00. This time is set aside for any new families looking for a preschool for their child or re-visits for those who have already been here.

With the holiday break over, I feel we can all settle down for the winter ahead and enjoy the rest of the 2013 school year. Until February, stay warm and healthy.

Sincerely,
Dawn Murphy
Here We Grow Preschool Director

Sunday School Volunteers:

Anger Management Unit 1/6-1/27

Art: Karen Facticeau

Cooking: Nan Johnson

Story Time: Janice Green

Video: VOLUNTEER NEEDED



From the Stewardship Committee:

Thank you all for your continued response to our "Step It Up" campaign. The pledge total as of December 21st is: \$120,000 (108 pledges).

We appreciate everyone's pledges, which help First Congregational plan the budget, and the time, talents, and treasure that you all contribute to help us thrive.

Sincerely,

Your Stewardship Committee
(Donna Dube, Linda Hardy, Shirley Hill and
Ellie Lowell)



Bonsai Tree Needs Home

Carol Luther recently received an evergreen Bonsai tree as a gift. The giver was not aware that Carol is "horticulturally challenged." Bonsai trees need special care and watering. Those needs cannot be met at Carol's house so she is looking for someone who will take the tree for their very own. Is that person you? Or, do you know someone who would enjoy a Bonsai to have and to care for from this day forward? If so, please contact Carol at 508-752-8974 for delivery.

From the Church Secretary

Dear Members of First Congregational,
Thank you for remembering me once again during the Christmas season. You continue to be a huge blessing in my life. I also want to thank all of you who have reached out to me with kind words of support and encouragement during my sister's illness. Many have indicated that they've been praying for my sister and our family and this means more than you'll ever know.

With much appreciation —
Denise

Tidings 2013 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!

Please call the Church office with any questions, 508-832-2845.

JANUARY TIDINGS FROM THE DIRECTOR OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Happy New Year! I can't believe that a new year is upon us. The children are settling in and really enjoying the new curriculum. I want to thank all of those members who have helped out, and continue to help in Sunday school. I truly believe that a strong connection to the church when you are young will give you the foundation you need as a young person to seek out the church and God for guidance. With this said, I am in need of teachers for the rest of the year. This is only a THREE week commitment. I have all the information you will need and there are many choices for you within each section. If you feel so moved to spend some time molding our future, please speak with me after church.

Parents Night Out went off without a hitch. We had six kids and an abundance of games to play thanks to Here We Grow. The Potluck and Carol Sing as usual was filled with good food, great company, and very talented musicians. If you have not yet joined us, please come next year.



I pray that this year brings you all good health and happiness. We are all truly blessed to have such a caring and fun church family.

With His guidance, we serve —

Jean McPherson
Director of Religious Education



SAVE THE DATE:

We are planning to generate a new photo directory in May. We have dates reserved for photos which will be taken on site Friday and Saturday, May 3rd and 4th, and Tuesday and Wednesday, May 14th and 15th.

Look for additional information to come as these dates approach.

I write to thank everyone for their gifts this Christmas. I appreciate your kind thoughts.

I want to thank the Confirmands for leading a great Family Christmas Eve service. I am sure I will nitpick how fast you talked in the service, but everyone talked about how well you did and were happy to be able to understand what was said.

God bless you all and may God bless His Church.

Pastor Brian

Thought for the Day:

Look back and thank God.
Look forward and trust God.
Look around and serve God.
Look within and find God!



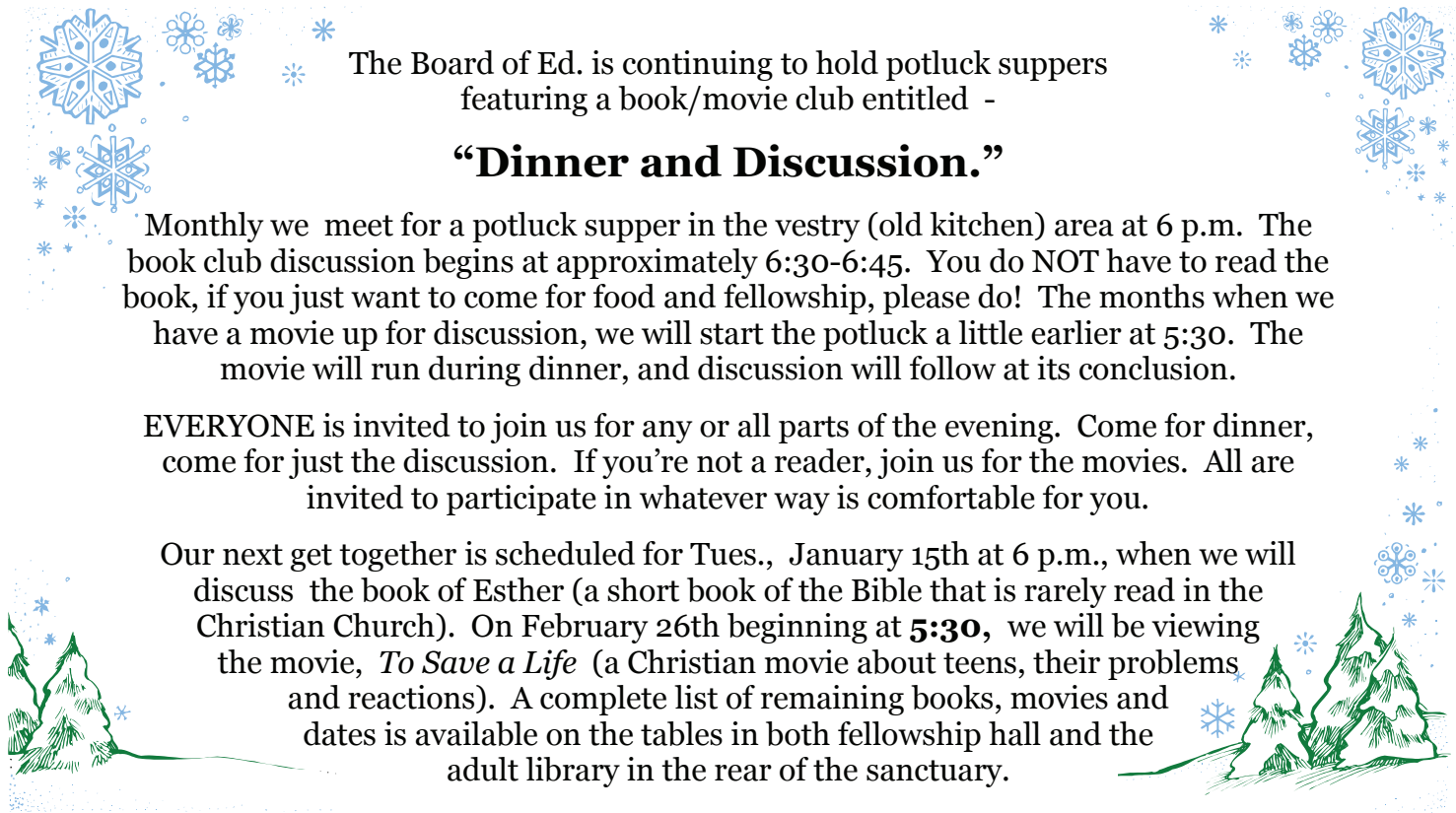
The Board of Ed. is continuing to hold potluck suppers featuring a book/movie club entitled -

“Dinner and Discussion.”

Monthly we meet for a potluck supper in the vestry (old kitchen) area at 6 p.m. The book club discussion begins at approximately 6:30-6:45. You do NOT have to read the book, if you just want to come for food and fellowship, please do! The months when we have a movie up for discussion, we will start the potluck a little earlier at 5:30. The movie will run during dinner, and discussion will follow at its conclusion.

EVERYONE is invited to join us for any or all parts of the evening. Come for dinner, come for just the discussion. If you’re not a reader, join us for the movies. All are invited to participate in whatever way is comfortable for you.

Our next get together is scheduled for Tues., January 15th at 6 p.m., when we will discuss the book of Esther (a short book of the Bible that is rarely read in the Christian Church). On February 26th beginning at **5:30**, we will be viewing the movie, *To Save a Life* (a Christian movie about teens, their problems and reactions). A complete list of remaining books, movies and dates is available on the tables in both fellowship hall and the adult library in the rear of the sanctuary.



TIDINGS is a monthly publication of

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

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or PastorBrian@auburnfirstucc.org

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doing Christ’s work in the world.*

Web: auburnfirstucc.org



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OR CURRENT RESIDENT