



# 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

"What Have We to Fear?"

As I look to the future, I have confidence. This fall we were worried about Ebola, ISIS, and the election. Ebola seems to be being contained in the countries of West Africa and some African countries have been able to eradicate it. The world needs to continue to help nations control disease because with jet planes and cargo ships the world is not as large as it once was. We need to fight disease anywhere it pops up, or else it will fly and be everyone's problem. To help the fight in West Africa the charities working there include UNICEF and Doctors Without Borders.

ISIS, likewise, after a lightning offensive this spring, is stagnant and even losing ground. The worry of ISIS to the world is the lone, disgruntled, violent young man using their garbage ideology to try to justify his violent criminal acts.

The election has passed. Some people got elected, some lost. Some ballot measures were passed, others defeated. My only big take away from the election is that marijuana is more popular than I thought. A year in prison costs as much as a year at the most expensive college. I am not sure putting pot smokers in prison is a good use of our prison money. On the other hand, I wonder will we soon have marijuana commercials alongside the beer commercials? Do we need new legal ways to not be in our right mind?

The fears of the fall have proven overblown, Surprise! The news exaggerates and makes minor annoyances into big scary events.

The time is coming for New Year's resolutions. Might I suggest a couple? "I will worry less." Maybe even recite the Serenity Prayer:

God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change,  
The courage to change the things I can,  
And the wisdom to know the difference.

Another suggestion is "I will have more faith in the goodness of people rather than expecting the worse." I hope 2015 is a wonderful year.

God bless you,  
Pastor Brian

## SERMON TITLES

- 1/4 "Coming Home"
- 1/11 "Baptism"
- 1/18 "Be a Good Soldier"
- 1/25 "Can Those People Do Good?"



Overflowing With Thanks

Thank you for my wonderful Christmas gifts. The stole is beautiful and will be seen on Easter. And the money gift was very generous.

Pastor Brian



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

**The Annual Meeting** will be held here on **Saturday, January 24th at 2 p.m.** (All committee/board end of year reports are **NOW** due.) The **Installation of Officers and Committees** will be during worship on **January 25th.** The **All Committee Meeting** will be on **Monday, January 26th at 7 p.m.**

#### **2015 Offering Envelopes**

Please pick up your 2015 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.

**The John E. & Ethel E. Riley Outstanding Citizenship Award** will be presented at a special service on **January 25 at 2 p.m.** at **St. Thomas Episcopal Church**, 35 School St., Auburn. Each year the award is presented to an outstanding citizen who has made life better for Auburn residents. Details (date and time) weren't finalized at time of printing; please refer to future bulletins or call the church office, 508-832-2845.

#### **Coffee Hour Hosts:**

1/4, 11 Trustees

1/18, 25 Music Committee

Please note: a new coffee hour schedule will be distributed at the All Committee Meeting on Monday, January 26th at 7 p.m.

#### **From the Church Secretary**

Shocked! That's the word that best describes my reaction upon opening the envelope Stan MacPhee dropped off to me right before Christmas. Completely and utterly shocked by the overwhelming generosity shown to me by you, the members of First Congregational Church. **Thank you so very much!** The gifts, the cards, the phone calls I received as you remembered me this Christmas are so very much appreciated. This brief note doesn't seem adequate, but I hope somehow you just know how much you mean to me!

Thank you and God bless,  
Denise

#### **Happy Birthday to:**

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



Please notify the church office if you would like to have your special occasion noted in the *Tidings* — just call 508-832-2845 or email: [secretary@auburnfirstucc.org](mailto:secretary@auburnfirstucc.org) with your birthday/anniversary information.

#### **ESTATE PLANNING?**

Have you included the church in your will or estate planning? Please prayerfully consider if the Lord would have you remember your church when completing your will.

*"One of the greatest missing teachings in the American church today is the reminder to men and women that nothing we have belongs to us."* Gordon MacDonald



Congratulations to the Tentor Family on the birth of Cameron Alden Peck, born Dec. 10th and weighing 7 lbs., 9 oz. and 21" long. Congratulations to parents, Ian and Kimberly Peck, and proud grandparents, Pam and Marty Tentor.

Church member, Pearl B. Morrill, who died in 2012 at age 106, left us a wonderful gift. For those of you who did not know her, Pearl was a very independent woman who lived alone until she was 103. She had been deaf from the age of 20 but did not consider it a handicap, and would tell Pastor Brian he should be visiting the elderly, not her. Pearl was an avid doll collector, and received the Boston Post Cane in 2007 from the Town of Auburn, honoring the oldest living person in town. Through her generosity she has bequeathed \$20,000 outright to the church, and after numerous bequests to other churches and charities, she left the remainder of her estate as a testamentary trust to benefit "The Elderly of the First Congregational Church in Auburn." At this time we have been informed the residual of her estate will be around \$500,000. We have received an initial distribution of \$375,000 for the trust; a final distribution will be made when the estate is finalized. The executor of her estate continues to identify additional assets which will be part of the trust.

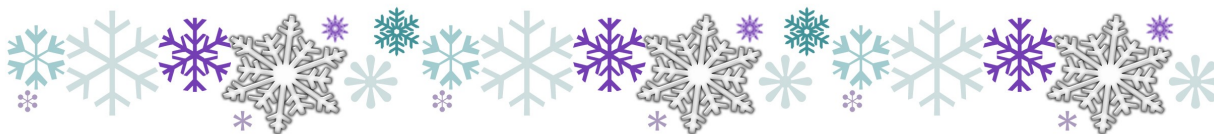
Her original will appointed the current minister of our church as sole trustee for administering and disbursing the trust. Since any minister could not, and should not, be assigned this responsibility in addition to the full time responsibilities as minister, we have been working for over a year to set up an alternative trust that would also address numerous other concerns we had. In order to do this we had to hire an attorney to deal with the Attorney General's office, the Probate Court, as well as the executor who wrote her will. Atty. Laurie Raphaelson has done an excellent job representing our interests to get a trust document approved by the Probate Court that we feel we can work with instead of the initial terms of the will.

A process has been established by the trust document to review and disposition requests for the use of the Pearl B. Morrill Trust funds. There is a form to request and justify expenditures that can be initiated by individuals or committees of the church. The expenditure must benefit "The Elderly of the First Congregational Church in Auburn," which can be an individual or elderly members as a group. The form is approved or disapproved by the Trustees of the Pearl B. Morrill Trust who are the Minister and the Deacons. Pastor Brian is also authorized to approve emergency expenditures up to \$500. The form will be available in the church office, or you can contact the Minister or a Deacon to help with the process.

The Prudential Committee of the Church has been authorized to invest the funds to help assure a continuation of her trust in the future.

It was Pearl's desire to assist the elderly of our church when they need any help. We now have the resources and procedures in place to do this in her memory.

Trustees of the Pearl B. Morrill Trust,  
Pastor Brian Grover, and the Deacons



### POTLUCK SUPPERS & MOVIE/BOOK DISCUSSION TIME

Our monthly potluck supper get-togethers in the vestry (old kitchen) area continue. The potlucks begin at 5:30 p.m. on movie nights with the movie viewing during dinner, and discussion to follow at its conclusion. On book discussion nights, the potluck begins at 6:00 p.m. with the book discussion beginning at approximately 6:30-6:45 p.m. You do NOT have to read the book, if you just want to come for food and fellowship, please do!

On Tuesday, January 20th at 6 p.m. we will be discussing the *Book of Enoch* which may be obtained at the following site:  
<http://www.sacred-texts.com/bib/boe/>.

On February 17th at 5:30 p.m. we'll view *White Christmas*.

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





### *Here We Grow* Preschool Welcomes in the New Year

Another year has come and gone and we welcome in 2015 with renewed energy. We successfully sang our way through the holidays and are now looking forward to settling in for a long, white winter. Hopefully, you and your families had a wonderful Christmas and are looking forward to the New Year and what it has to offer. All good things, I hope.

During the month of December, *Here We Grow* and First Congregational Church families, in conjunction with the Auburn Police Department, ran a Holiday Gift Collection for ages infant to 16 year 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 (82 items). This is one small way *Here We Grow* continues as an educational outreach program of First Congregational Church. Thank you to all who participated.

Our holiday programs were held on December 22<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> with visits from Santa, thank you, Pastor Brian. Thanks go out to Stan McPhee, Wayne Prouty and Dave Sampson for setting up Fellowship Hall and Denise Jobin for creating our beautiful and festive program for our 4-year-olds' special day. 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 classes did mini programs in the vestry with just a few family members attending. After the program on December 23<sup>rd</sup>, the staff enjoyed their holiday luncheon at Zorba's.

We are busy preparing for the upcoming school year of 2015-2016. Visits will start in January with prospective new students and families for the upcoming school year. *Here We Grow* will be hosting an "Open House" on March 10, 2015 from 9:00-11:00. 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 2014/15 school year. Until February, stay warm and healthy.

Sincerely,  
Dawn Murphy  
*Here We Grow* Preschool Director





Happy New Year!

January is Cervical Health Awareness Month, National Birth Defects Month, National Blood Donor Month, and National Glaucoma Awareness Month. There is information on the health table in Fellowship Hall.

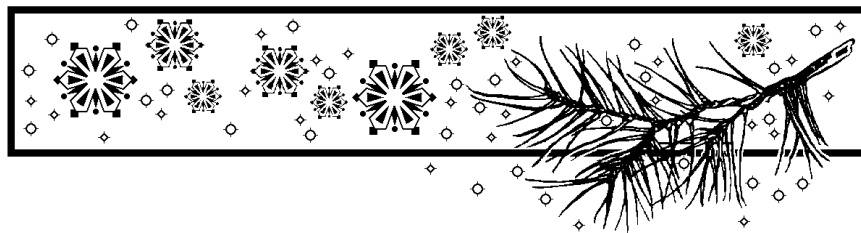
The health closet at the end of the educational wing has medical supplies that can be taken at any time. Someone has a used scooter that won't fit in the closet, so if someone needs one, please contact me or the church office.

This is cold and flu season. Hand washing is the BEST way to prevent the spread of germs. Take time to wash thoroughly and sing "ABC's," "Twinkle, Twinkle," or just count the seconds. It's worth it!

If you or a loved one is hospitalized and you want a visit, please call the church office. Also check to see if the person is registered as admitted or on observation. It can make a difference in what your insurance covers!

Have a Happy, Healthy New Year!

Debbie Pranaitis  
Parish Nurse  
cell: 508-612-4521



**Tidings 2015  
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.

## LIBRARY TIDINGS

We're a large group with diversified ideas, but new or old, there's a lot of uplifting thoughts for a troubled world among us. You can sit and look us over and take one or more of us home; we'd like that. We'll be looking for you to start 2015 with an uplift that you choose.

The Library

Sadly, this is the last Library *Tidings* submission we received from Gloria Whitehead before she went on to receive her eternal reward on December 28th. She leaves a void in the lives of us who were blessed to have known her. Her cheerful countenance will be dearly missed. In tribute to Gloria . . . read a book (preferably one obtained from the church library) and may Gloria's love of books and day-brightening demeanor be contagious.

**Gloria (Stephan) Whitehead**, a well-loved resident of the Overlook Community of Charlton and former longtime Auburn resident, died suddenly on Sun., December 28, 2014 in Harrington Hospital, Southbridge.

She was predeceased by her beloved husband, Richard D. Whitehead, in 1998. Gloria leaves her daughters, Linda Whitehead and her husband, Gary Quitslund, and Constance (Connie) Whitehead Hanks and her husband, Ronald Hanks, along with three granddaughters, Emily L. Hanks, Kelsea A. Hanks, and Signe L. Quitslund. She also leaves many cousins, friends and loved-ones.

Gloria was born in Worcester, MA. She was the daughter of William and Caroline (Mueller) Stephan. She graduated from North High in Worcester (1946) and Boston University (1950) in the school of Practical Arts and Letters where she was a member of its Scarlet Key Honor Society. Gloria was in the Filene's Executive Training Squad and later worked alongside her father at Stephan Barber's Supply, Co.

Gloria was a 60-year member of our Church, where she was active on many committees, particularly the Children's Library. She served as Chaplain in the Worcester County Nile which worked to support Shriner's Hospital for Children. She was actively involved in the Camp Fire organization and was Director of their day camps at Marion's Camp in Sutton and Shore Park in Worcester. Gloria loved to garden and was a lifetime member of the Worcester Horticultural Society/Tower Hill Botanic Garden.

Relatives and friends are invited to attend visiting hours on Friday, January 2, 2015 from 4-7 PM in the Britton-Wallace Funeral Home, 91 Central Street in Auburn. Burial in Hope Cemetery in Worcester will be held on Saturday, January 3 at 9:30 am prior to the memorial service which will take place at 11:00 am at the First Congregational Church of Auburn, 128 Central Street.

Donations may be made in lieu of flowers to the Shriners Children's Hospital, 516 Carew St., Springfield, MA 01104 or to the First Congregational Church Memorial Fund, 128 Central Street, Auburn, MA 01501.

Please be in prayer for Gloria's family during this time of sudden loss.

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

John 11:25

We have received several thank you notes in response to the Deacons' Christmas baskets.

Please check out the bulletin board in Fellowship Hall.

Thank you to the Deacons and to those who helped assemble the baskets and/or contributed food donations.

Thank you to Carole Murray for the beautiful new curtains now adorning the Sunday school rooms.



Thank you to our church family for all the well wishes and prayers as we welcomed our baby boy, Cameron Alden, into the world on December 10, 2014.

Sincerely,  
Kimberly (Tentor) and Ian Peck

## FROM THE DIRECTOR OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Happy New Year! I pray your Christmas was filled with the joy and wonder of that first Christmas night so long ago. Christmas Eve was celebrated with a wonderful pageant preformed by the Sunday School and Confirmation classes. As always, it was magical and brought many of us back to when we were younger. I am always amazed that no matter how many times I hear the Christmas story it brings a tear to my eyes. I want to thank everyone who helped to make this performance special.

A major THANK YOU to all of you who helped with the cookie walk — all of our delicious bakers and, of course, those who “strolled the walkway” to fill a tin or two. The youth group made \$500! We are about half way to our goal. Please remember you can still order Rada knives throughout the upcoming year and YOM will get the credit.

The Sunday School is bursting at the seams and we needed to take back a classroom from HWG to accommodate all our new families. Please be sure to say “hello” to any new faces you see at coffee hour. I am keeping the children downstairs briefly after service to give the parents/grandparents a moment or two to socialize before the kids join them. This is a perfect opportunity to introduce yourself.

The upcoming year will be filled with many activities. Plans to go to Monadnock Bible Conference (if funds allow) as well as City Reach in Boston are in the planning stages. We are also going to have a representative from Abby’s House to come and speak to the children as we present them with a check from the offerings we have collected over the past 4 months. The Sunday School will be picking another child centered organization for the next couple months after the holidays. I will keep you posted. Just a reminder, we collect an offering every week during our gathering/worship time.

I want to take this time to thank everyone who has helped me in the past year. The classrooms look beautiful and thanks to Carole Murray and “the boys” we have beautiful curtains that all match! My Sunday school volunteers are indispensable and if you have volunteered you can see how needed they are. Please consider coming down and see what we are up to.

I pray this year brings good health and much happiness to each of you.

“Feeling gratitude and not expressing it is like having a present and not giving it.” ~ (W. Ward)

Jean McPherson, Director of Religious Education

We recently received the following note:

*I'd like to thank all my Church family for the cards, good wishes and prayers. Especially the visits from Debbie, Avis, Charlotte and Pastor Brian. They are all appreciated.*

*Keep praying for my recovery.*

*Thank you,  
Sue Anderton*

*To our Church family,*

*We want to thank our Church family for their thoughts and prayers during Don's illness.*

*It is very comforting to know that "others care."*

*A thank you also to the one responsible for the rose on "his pew" the day of his service.*

*Thank you again —*

*Marion, Dot, Jenney &  
Charlie Woodcock*



### Community Supper

**Saturday, January 17th at 5 p.m.**

Please join us for a delicious roast beef supper.

**Adults \$10 Children \$5**

(Volunteers are always needed and appreciated!)

We hope to see you there!

*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

### January 2015

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**