

Herald of Good TIDINGS



2005

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“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!’”

A Note From the Pastor

At the April Council meeting, the church council discussed three issues that are important to the life of our church: church identity, requests for support of various causes, and attracting new members and support.

Each church in Auburn and each church in the United Church of Christ has its own unique identity. We are beginning to describe First Congregational Church's unique identity in words and ideas that we find meaningful. This is a process that should involve as many parishioners as possible. Please talk with members of the Diaconate or send in a note with your description of our church.


The Outreach Committee and the Stewardship Committee discussed the number and varieties of request for support that we offered to our church members. We might create a policy to guide the number and types of requests that are made of our parishioners during coffee hour. Again we are looking for information and opinions to help develop such a policy. Speak with members of the Stewardship or Outreach Committees or send a note to the church office.

The third issue is attracting new members to share our ministries and increase support of present and new ministries. How do we prepare ourselves to grow? We are interested in your ideas.

Please join us in these discussions!

God Bless,

Rev. Dr. Kenneth E. Knox
Pastor

The  Grace
of God is
with you!

Here We Grow! Preschool

With April just about over, the children and staff of *Here We Grow!* (HWG) are in the last stretch of the 2004-2005 school year. This year seems to have gone by very fast.

It's wonderful to see smiles on everyone's faces as we finally have the opportunity to wear summer clothing. Put away those winter coats. With the cleaning of the outside playground almost complete, (Thank You Wayne Prouty!), the children have been spending more time out in the fresh air and enjoying sunny days. It feels so good.

The month of May will be a busy time for everyone at HWG. Heading off for our end-of-the-year field trips, the 3-year-olds will explore at Discovery Museum in Acton while the 4-year-olds venture to Davis Farmland in Sudbury. We pray for nice weather. R.H. White will be providing the buses.

The 4-year-old children will also be visiting Mary D. Stone School and touring the kindergarten rooms. We hope to ease the children's fears of what the "big school" is like.

Winding down the month of May we will be practicing and preparing for our end-of-the-year programs. All 3's will have a program and Spree Day to top off their first year at HWG. All 4's will be "graduating" during the second week of June. HWG graduations are very special for the children, their families and the staff. Stop in if you'd like, you'll be surprised and pleased as to how graduation is celebrated at HWG.

After Spree Day and Graduation, the staff will be busy preparing the classrooms for 2 weeks of summertime fun. Both weeks are full with wait lists.

HWG will officially close July 1st, until the middle of August, when we start all over with the new children and families. Until then:

Have a safe and fun-filled summer.

Dawn Murphy,
Director of *Here We Grow!* Preschool

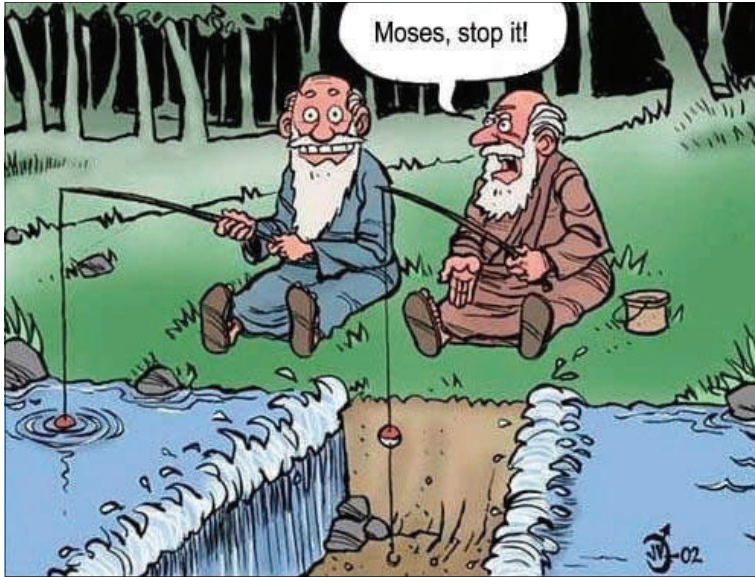


In front of a church in Texas is an electronic sign that flashes a new message from God every few minutes. Here are just a few:

- *What Part of "Thou Shall Not" didn't you understand? - God*
- *Don't make me come down there! - God*
- *Keep using my name in vain, and I will make rush hour traffic longer. - God*
- *That "love thy neighbor" thing, I meant it! - God*
- *Let's meet at my house before the game. - God*
- *Have you read my #1 best seller? There will be a quiz. - God*
- *Loved the wedding, how about inviting me to the marriage? - God*
- *C'mon over and bring the kids. - God*
- *We need to talk? - God*



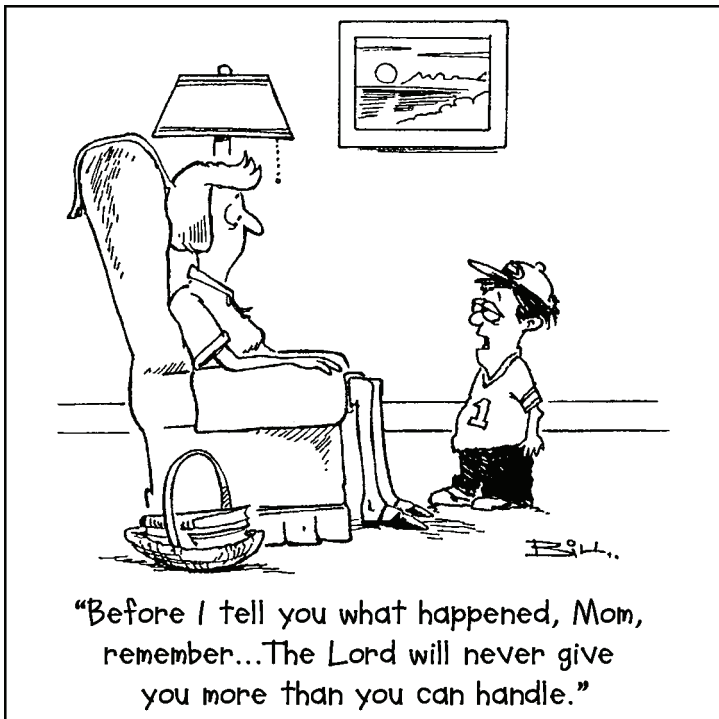
Smile Section



Doctor's

As I sat there waiting for my new doctor to make his way through the file that contained my very extensive medical history.

After he finished all seventeen pages, he looked at me and said, "You look better in person than you do on paper."

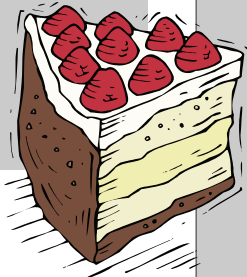


PARISH NURSE

May is National Mental Health Month, National Sight-Saving Month, National Osteoporosis Awareness & Prevention Month, Lyme Disease Awareness Month, National Trauma Awareness Month, Older Americans Month, Skin Cancer Awareness Month, national High Blood Pressure Education Month, and National Bike Safety Month. This is a good reminder for all of us to make the necessary appointments that we might have otherwise been putting off. May 9th is Women's Check-Up Day.

I have scheduled "Feet First" here in Fellowship Hall on Wednesday May 11, at 6:30 p.m. It is a free educational program put on by Fairlawn Rehab Hospital about pool safety and also bike safety. All are welcome. There is no age limit and it should only be about 45-60 minutes in length. Fairlawn Rehab has several free programs to educate people of all ages. If you have any suggestions, please let me know and I'd be happy to set them up. I have invited scout groups and Hadwen Park members to this program, but it is open to all. People will be opening their pools and going on vacations soon, so I thought this would be a good time for these safety issues.

Sincerely,
Debbie Pranaitis
Parish Nurse



The Tidings Are Online!

Thanks to some generous donations, we now have electronic versions of the Tidings and the monthly calendar online. Just click on the **Newsletter** button (see picture) on the left hand side of our homepage that can be found at www.AuburnFirstUCC.org. These documents are published in a format called PDF that most computers can read automatically. If you cannot read these files, there is information on the church website to download free software to view the files.

If you have any questions or suggestions for the church website please email us at:

Webmaster@AuburnFirstUCC.org

Phantom of the Opera

Forty-two people traveled to Boston to see the musical "Phantom of the Opera" at the Opera House Theater on Sunday, April 10th. The trip included dinner in Boston and the evening show. Over \$500 was raised for the Roof Fund. In 2004, 95 people took a similar trip to see Lion King. Then over \$1000 was raised for "Youth on a Mission". Our thank you to all of the participants.

Cake Walk

On Mother's Day, May 8th, we will be hosting a "Cake Walk". What is a "Cake Walk"? Well, there is cake involved!!! What could be better!! Your \$2 donation gets you (1) frosted cupcake which you can eat, **or** you can choose to upgrade your cupcake in our "Cake Walk". Please see Linda Graham for more details or call her at 508-832-9507. All proceeds are for the roof fund.

Parents of High School Students:

If you are considering enrolling your young person in confirmation class for 2005-2006 (Sept-May), please call the church office so we can order sufficient text books.

The first meeting with parents and confirmands will be Sunday Sept. 11, 2005 at 7:00 P.M.

INTERFAITH HOSPITALITY NETWORK

Have you been thinking about what you will do to make our guests feel at home??? The families will be staying with us at First Congregational from Sunday, July 31st thru Sunday, August 7th. We hope you can help.

We hope you can join us for an informational/planning meeting on Wednesday, May 25th. Please come if you want to know more about Interfaith, and of course, all who have been involved throughout the years. We look forward to planning another great week for our guests. There are many ways for us to show kindness and hospitality to others in the way the Bible tells us we should. Thank you for helping to make a difference in the lives of the families we will be hosting.

Looking forward to seeing you at my house

Place: 11 Paul Street (corner of Maybelle) Auburn

Time: 7pm

When: Wednesday, May 25th

Thank you
Diane Moore 508-832-8078



Opportunities for youth grade 6th and up



We will be taking part in our first youth bicycling event on Saturday May 28th. We will meet at the Sutton 1st Church at 8:00am. Bikes will be trailered to Providence, RI where bikers will peddle on a mostly flat and EASY route. They'll have two breaks and a lunch break. Everyone will need to bring a lunch. Bikers will return at approximately 5:00pm. This is open to ANYONE 6th grade and up. You must have your own bicycle and a helmet is MANDATORY. See Jennifer Bohn for more details or call her at 508-832-0428.

Youth on a Mission has found itself in a rather unusual position with regards to our mission trip this summer to Wheeling, West Virginia. Due to some unforeseen circumstances we have two openings, for which we have already sent deposits.

These two slots would be open to any high school youth, male or female, that has completed confirmation class and is a member of First Congregational Church of Auburn. The interested individual would be responsible for the program fee of \$275. YM would cover costs for transportation etc. This is a **FANTASTIC, once in a lifetime** opportunity, for any young person who's thought about participating in YM but hasn't yet made the commitment or who has participated in the past and wants to come back.

Mission Trip



We leave **very** early on Saturday July 16th and will return on Sunday July 24th. Please see Jennifer Bohn for details or call her at 508-832-0428.



Stewardship...A Way of Life

The next in our series of Stewardship topics is Time. Time, along with our individual talents, is what we give of ourselves to God and our Church. As the *Stewardship* thought for April stated, our time, talents and treasures ARE God's. God granted each of us the opportunities and gifts we have so that we can, in turn, share and give to the Church and those around us. Consider the opportunities in the Church's life where you might be able to give of your time...to teach Sunday School or to assist in the fund-raising efforts of our monthly dinners or seasonal fairs or to serve on a board or committee or to assist with Interfaith Hospitality...the opportunities are endless and there are so many more opportunities than what are mentioned here. Time is a valuable commodity to each and every one of us but it is also the opportunity for us to give back to God for His purpose. Please consider how you can give of your time.

Our Committee hopes that each of you finds *Stewardship* a valuable addition to the monthly Tidings mailing. We welcome any comments and/or thoughts you might have regarding this publication or about Stewardship in general. Please feel free to speak with any one of us or send your comments via email to Stewardship@AuburnFirstUCC.org. We look forward to hearing from you.

In His Love,
 The Stewardship Committee
 John Rockwood (Chair), Michael & Michele Schillinger, Al Boucher, Todd and Donna Dube, Kenneth Holstrom

Family Camping Weekend



This Year's Family Camping Weekend is scheduled for June 24th – 26th. This year we are moving the Camping Weekend to Oak Haven Family Campground (www.oakhavencampground.com) located in Wales just 30 minutes west of Auburn. Oak Haven offers the following amenities: Basketball & Volleyball courts, Playground, Baseball field, Swimming Pool, and many planned activities. Whether you Tent camp or RV, all are welcome. Non-campers are welcome to join us for our traditional potluck supper on Saturday followed by a family campfire. Please contact Lori Stockhaus at 508-865-6439 for more information. We would like to get an accurate count of families by May 8th.

NAME: _____

Tel. No. _____

Rates: \$28/night for 2 Adults. Children (6yrs & up) \$1.00 per night.

Make checks payable to Lori Stockhaus, and mail to :
 36 Linda Ave, Millbury, MA. 01527
 please return by May 8th.

Summer Solstice Celebration Saturday June 18th

Save the date and join us for a day long, and into the night, celebration of the Longest Day of the year.



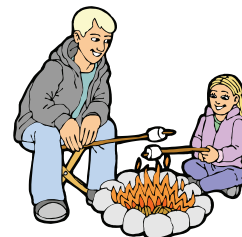
The morning will begin at 9:00 A.M. There will be plants, books, videos, games and baked goods for sale as well as activities for the kids. Flippo the clown will be here from 10:30 to 12:30 with a 1/2 hour magic and juggling show at 11:00(\$1 for admission to the show). He will be making balloon animals before and after the magic show. Coffee, popcorn, hotdogs, and snow cones will be available through out the day. There will be a dunk tank, and cake decorating for Dad (\$3), a HUGE SLIDE, games, prizes and more!!! (1 ticket required for each game - 12 tickets for \$5)



As the afternoon progresses you may start to notice the aroma of a chicken barbecue in the breeze. They will serve from 4-7 P.M. and from 5-6 P.M. you will be entertained by the Alethea Grotto Band. Tickets for the barbecue are on sale now, and we ask that anyone who is interested, please purchase your tickets early so that we can plan the food accordingly. Tickets are \$9.00 per person and \$5.00 for children 12 and under. Tickets are available at the church office between 8:30 and 2:30 Mon. - Fri. and after church during coffee hour. Invite your friends to join you for supper!



And that's not all!!! To wind down this day long event, we invite you to bring your lawn chairs or a blanket and sit with us by the fire around 7 P.M. There will be a sing along and S'mores fixins available for purchase. Mike Dube will also be reading a story around the fire. This will be a day that will be remembered for generations!



If you would like to donate books, games or puzzles, please do so ASAP by dropping them off in the office wing of the church. Please make sure that all the pieces are included. Sue Anderton is still looking for anyone that would be interested in joining her at the church on Mondays at 9:30 A.M. to assist in sorting the donated items. She will be sorting on May 16 & 23 and also on June 6 & 13. Please call Sue at 508-832-8799 if you can help on any of these dates.

All proceeds will go toward the roof fund.



FIRST EVER FLAGTOWN USA ART CONTEST

Show off your talent by showing your true colors. Paint anything you wish, 3-D or flat, in a RED, WHITE and BLUE, stars and stripes motif. Be creative with what you choose to paint: a lawn chair, wagon, wall decorations, etc. Entry fee is \$15.00. All entries will be displayed on the church lawn and voted on by those wishing to purchase a flag pin and ballot. Winners will be announced during the BBQ. We are hopeful that we will have a float in the July 4th parade and some or all of the entrees will be on the float. If you have any questions or want a copy of the entry rules, please contact Cindy Dube at 508-832-6646.

Choir Tidings



May 15 is Choir Recognition Day and we have chosen three of our favorite anthems to present. *'Shine, Jesus, Shine'* written by Graham Kendrick, is very well known and popular with many choirs. The opening page states "Energetic Soft Rock Feel" while the last several pages are in four parts. *'Looking for the Light'* by Ruth Schram is a light, up tempo and bouncy anthem. *'Thank You Lord'* arranged by John Carter is an African American Spiritual in a strong gospel style.

On May 22 we will have "Joyful Noyse Recognition Day". The youth will be singing a "mini" musical I put together from two sources: 'Kids Praise!' and 'Partners in Spirit'. Their songs consist of: *'Father, I adore you'*; *'Children of the Lord'*; *'Joshua Fought the Battle of Jericho'*; and *'Swing Low, Sweet Chariot'*. The first two are meditative in nature, while the second two are traditional spirituals.

We hope there is something for everyone!

Blessings,
Heather Moore
Director of Music

May 15 - Sr. Choir Recognition Day

May 22 - Jr. Choir Recognition Day

NEWS FROM NEPAL

In July the Andersons will have completed their first tour of serving as medical missionaries in the country they have grown to love and the people that have touched their hearts and minds. Their furlough will be for 6 months and they will return to Nepal.

Glen is a CHP (Community Health Provider) which is just beginning to bear fruit. Jennie has become the instructor for orientation to the Nepali language. This is amazing as languages are not her strong point!!! It just shows that Philipians 4:13 is a truism!!

The children appear to be thriving and Sam, the baby, will be 2 1/2 yrs old!! Ben will shortly be 10 and Lizzy will be 8.

Thank you to the many friends at church that have kept them in their thoughts and prayers. It means ever so much.

-Mary Lou



Our sympathies to the family and friends of Ellen Beauvais, who passed away on March 29, 2005.

4th Annual Golf Tournament

Saturday, June 11 at Pine Ridge Country Club in Oxford. 7 A.M. Registration and 7:30 A.M. Tee-off

Event features:

Raffe, Hole in One contest. Longest Drive contest, Closest to the Pin contest , prizes to top 3 teams.

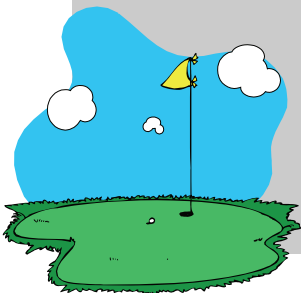
\$85/player!

Includes round of golf & cart, Hors d'Oeuvres & Italian Buffet Lunch!

Non-golfers are welcome to join us for dinner! (\$30/person)

We are looking for sponsors for each hole and green. Your sponsorship will get acknowledged with a sign on that hole or green. This is a great way to advertise! Please let us know what you would like the sign to say. Sponsorship is \$100.

Make checks payable to:
First Congregational Church
Memo: Golf



In memory of...



REV. GEORGE HODGKINS

On Mother's Day, May 8th, we will be remembering the late Rev. George Hodgkins. Rev. Hodgkins served at First Congregational Church in Auburn from 1955-1961.

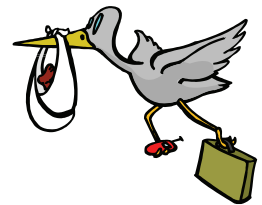
He was born in Quincy and at age 10 lost the sight in his right eye after a playmate poked him with a stick. He became an avid ping pong player and later an accomplished organist.

In 1959, while serving at the First Congregational Church in Auburn, he accompanied 50 pregnant cows on a freighter trip to Germany. The trip was sponsored by the nonprofit Heifer Project as a renewable source of nourishment for German refugees. The cows selected were pregnant cows so that the gift would soon double. Four calves were born in route.

Mr. Hodgkins did many things such as participating in King's civil rights march and he spoke often about the millions of dollars spent on sports that would have been better spent on homeless shelters and food banks.

He was 80 when he died after 55 years in the pulpit. His wife Connie remembers him fondly and will be here to honor him on May 8th.

Katherine O'Malley Luther.
Katherine was born on April 3, 2005 to Richard and Maureen Luther.
Proud and happy grandparents, Bob and Carol Luther, report that everyone is doing fine.



Joyful Noyse Rehearsal Schedule

Sunday, May 1,8,15 - 11 A.M. rehearsal
Sunday, May 22 - Joyful Noyse Recognition Day
9:30 A.M.
Kids Praise!

Special welcome to our

Confirmands:

Adam Pranaitis

Eric Pranaitis

Kelsea Hanks

Chelsea Fant

&

New Member:

Karen Wheeler

Library Tidings

By Gloria Whitehead

There were 61 children's books and five videos in the pews on Sunday April 24. We hope that you took the opportunity to glance at a few and were impressed by a story, illustration or a timely subject that you didn't expect to find in your children's library. Our thanks to those who borrowed four of the books.



The month's theme almost became a chore. Then, in checking the calendar, May 5th is World Day of Prayer, Mother's Day is on the 8th and the 30th is Memorial Day. I came to library meeting early hoping a perusal of the bookshelves would inspire. The situation only improved when the theme was discarded and the following books are among those being featured:

Lincoln's Mothers - *A story of Nancy and Sally Lincoln by Dorothy Clarke Wilson*, "All That I am" said Lincoln, "I owe to my angel mother". "Which mother?" he was once asked. "Both" he replied.

It's my Turn by *Ruth Bell Graham* (Billy Graham's wife) Just a bit from page 110, "On hearing indignant words from the kitchen, I looked to see what was happening. Bunny (her daughter) age 3, was holding her hand to her cheek and eyeing Anne reproachfully! "What on earth's the matter?", I demanded. "Mommy," replied 5 year old Anne patiently, "I'm teaching Bunny about the Bible. I'm slapping her one cheek and teaching her to turn the other one so I can slap it, too."

However, the best came when I was trying to cram a book into a case which was tightly filled. No Way! So I pulled out a skinny book - problem solved - more than solved. The thin book was The Gift of Acabar by *Og Mandino and Buddy Kane*. It was given by Abbie Wiley and was last borrowed by Florence La Plante in 1992. The flap reads "And so it came to pass that once upon a time...but not very long ago, mind you...in a small and desolate Lapland village far north of the Arctic...a miracle occurred. If only the world had known..."At the very least, turn The Gift of Acabar over and read the comments of a president of Amway; an author, lecturer, founder, chairman of the board of the Combined Insurance Co. of America; a president of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints and the co-founder of Holiday Inns.

Just a thought - Life is an act of faith. Struggle is optional.

The Library Committee

Quotation from Woman about Woman

My second favorite household chore is ironing. My first being hitting my head on the top bunk until I faint. (Erma Bombeck)

The phrase "working mother" is redundant. (Jane Sellman)

I try to take one day at a time, but sometimes several days attack me at once. (Jennifer Unlimited)

If you can't be a good example, then you'll just have to be a horrible warning. (Catherine Aird)

Nobody can make you feel inferior without your permission. (Eleanor Roosevelt)

Out the Window

By Tammy Whittier

We have all been waiting for Spring and many of us have been “chompin’ at the bit” to get outside and do some yard clean-up. This was a messy winter in many ways. Besides the sand and the salt, we had windy days that blew trash all over the sides of the streets making things look very unpleasant as the snow melted away. I resolved that at first chance I was going to tackle the trash clean-up along the street in front of my house.

The day arrived and my husband, Scott, and my youngest daughter, Krissy, donned gloves and grabbed trash bags to begin the clean-up. Krissy is very keen on frogs and wants to keep their habitat clean so she pulled on her hip waders and we all trudged down the long driveway to the roadside.

Krissy went right into the muddy water and began pulling out bleach bottles, plastic grocery bags, Styrofoam coffee cups, and beer and soda cans. Scott went across the street to where someone had thrown out a whole trash bag full of stuff. It had been rummaged through by the local animal population and was scattered about quite a bit. He also picked up a couch cushion and some door framing material.

I started walking along the street on my side of the road picking up trash as I went. I picked up cans and bottles. I picked up all different sizes of alcohol bottles. I picked up cigarette wrappers and fast food bags. I grabbed a Styrofoam minnow bucket out of a bush. And then I came upon something that stopped me cold. A pregnancy test. And then another one. Why would anyone throw their pregnancy test out of the car window? It hit me. They wanted to hide it. They didn’t want anyone to know.

Just like the alcohol bottles, they must have thought that if they threw them out the window, they wouldn’t get caught with them. Be it teenagers or grown-ups, drinking in a car is against the law. So I figured that what I was picking up were people’s *sins*, the parts of their lives that they wanted to hide. They didn’t want to get caught with these items so they threw them out the window.

My bag got heavier and heavier as I continued to clean and I thought about how God sees everything that we do and that just because they threw these things out the window didn’t mean that no one knew about it. God Knows! “How can God stand us?”, I thought to myself. And then I thought of Jesus. I thought of Jesus with all that trash being poured on him while he hung on the cross. The stuff that I couldn’t touch without gloves on, was heaped on Christ that day on the cross. Jesus doesn’t want us to throw it out the window and hide our sin, but rather, he wants us to give it to Him and confess that our sin is wrong and promise that we will try, very sincerely, not to do it again. He became the receptacle for all that trash in our lives so that we could have everlasting life with His Father.

I took my bag of trash to Jesus in prayer that night. I told him I was sorry for my sins and I asked Him for guidance and strength to help me not to do those things that are displeasing in God’s eyes.

So remember, when you’re doing things that feel wrong, keep in mind who is doing the clean-up. Jesus is! Don’t throw your sins out the window to hide them, but confess them to Him! If you do, He will bless you with His promise of eternal life with Him in heaven as it was written:

For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God sent the Son into the world, not to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him. He who believes in him is not condemned; he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God. And this is the judgment, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one who does evil hates the light, and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. But he who does what is true comes to the light, that it may be clearly seen that his deeds have been wrought in God. - (John 3:16)

The Bulletin Board

- May 1 Confirmation Day
- May 8 Mother's Day with Cake Walk
- May 11 "Feet First" Pool Safety and more seminar 6:30 P.M. (page 4)
- May 15 Sr. Choir Recognition
- May 22 Jr. Choir Recognition
- May 28 Bike Tour (Age 16+) (page 5)
- June 11 Golf Tournament (page 9)
- June 12 Children's Sunday w/ picnic on the lawn after church (insert)
- June 18 Summer Solstice Celebration (page 7)
- June 19 Father's Day
- June 24-26 Camping weekend (page 6)

During the months of May and June, we will be collecting offerings to support the Tools & Blankets Program thru Church World Service. The offerings will be collected on Mother's and Father's Day, but offerings will be accepted anytime during the two months.



This list does not include weekly reoccurring meetings. All meetings are listed on the calendar insert. Please notify the church secretary immediately if something is *not* listed on the calendar. 508-832-2845.

TIDINGS is a monthly publication of

First Congregational Church
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Auburn MA 01501

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 Fax: (508)721-2539
 Web: auburnfirststucc.org



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