

2023



# 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 our Interim Pastor — The Rev. Dr. Virginia Child

When my grandfather was a young man in Woodstock CT, he sold milk, butter and eggs door to door in a horse-drawn wagon. By the time he died, we’d landed a man on the Moon. He grew up in a world that didn’t yet have typewriters, and, though he didn’t have one, people had begun to have their own computers by his death. The world had changed so quickly and much was turned upside down.

We’re in the midst of another fruit-basket upset change in our world today. Except, this time, it’s not “things” (horse-drawn-carts to spacecraft) that have changed, but rather expectations and assumptions in our world. And in many ways, today’s list of changes is much more disconcerting than improvements in transportation and communication were to my grandparents.

Our understandings of the people in our world have changed.

Our expectations and opportunities for people have changed.

And our reasons for attending and supporting our local churches have changed as well.

These changes are driving massive changes in our UCC churches. Some of you have already spoken to me about the changes in attendance and participation you’ve seen here. Fewer people come to church; they find it harder to take up membership. As we look into the future, we’re beginning to realize we don’t know what’s coming next.

Here’s what the folks who study churches are saying: more and more, people come to church – when they come – to meet God. They come to find purpose, meaning and value. What they don’t come to do is join committees, or volunteer to do things that we’re really only doing because they were important to our grandparents. On the other hand, they’ll work their fingers to the bone to keep a worthwhile project going.

And here’s another thing they’ll do. Imagine we come up with a project - re-starting the Food Pantry or giving a new book to every first-grader at the end of the school year – but we’re hesitant to jump in because we don’t have enough people to do it. If the project meets a community need, folks these days will recruit their friends and family to join the project, even if they’ll never join the church. We become the force multiplier – our small group draws in others to share the work.

We are becoming the leaven in our communities, the spirit of God’s love and justice which makes a community strong. We will be the cheerleaders, the encouragers, the folks who rally the town around a goal. Instead of thinking our purpose is to maintain the building, or to keep up the organizational structure as it is, we’ll shift our focus so that we see our service as the center, and our building, worship time, Bible studies, etc., as resources to help keep us – and our world – on the way.

Blessings,

Pastor Virginia

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## MEMORIAL SUNDAY SERVICE — 10 A.M. NOVEMBER 5<sup>TH</sup>

We have designated November 5th as Memorial Sunday this year. At this special worship service we remember church members that we have lost in the past year. Also during this service, congregants will have an opportunity to come forward and receive a flower and light a candle in memory of a loved one.

This service of remembrance has proven to be moving and very special to those who have lost loved ones, so please mark your calendars for November 5th, and plan to join us on Memorial Sunday.

October Birthdays include:

Eric Rockwood - Oct. 21st

**Happy Birthday!**

**OCTOBER**



On October 8th

Rich and Jean McPherson will be celebrating their wedding anniversary.

**Happy Anniversary!**

### **Bell Choir:**

Rehearsals start up again on Sunday, October 15th at 2:00 P.M. at the church.

New or inquisitive folks are always welcome. For more info, contact Herb Mower at 508-434-2864.

### **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,  
American Pastor & Teacher

### **COFFEE HOUR HOSTS**

10/1 The MacPhees

10/8 **VOLUNTEERS NEEDED**

10/15 Financial Secretaries/Treasurers

10/22 Board of Christian Education (BOCE)

10/29 Stewardship Thank-you Brunch

**Please sign-up in fellowship hall if you would like to host an upcoming coffee hour — thank you!**

Fall is a time of new beginnings!

Please give serious thought to trying something new.

The bell choir is always looking for new members -- and you don't need to know how to read music. They are starting up rehearsals again on Sunday, October 15, at 2:00.

The chancel (voice) choir is particularly in need of new members. They do an amazing job now, but imagine how more voices could add to the repertoire. And it would allow more flexibility for the current members.

We all understand how important music and singing is to our services and how we all need to support this ministry. We know there are people in church who love to sing...we hear you! Why not give chancel choir a try?

Please speak to Paulette, a choir member, or a music committee member and find out how rewarding it can be to make a joyful noise unto the Lord. Thank you for your consideration.

Your Music Committee — Bev Scobie, Patricia Hilbert, Ellie Lowell

## STEPPING FORWARD IN FAITH

October is the start of First Congregational Church's stewardship campaign. This annual renewal is important for each of us as we recommit to God in sharing our time, talent and treasure. Although financial pledges are determined at this time, stewardship is ongoing as we remember our blessings.

This is a time to encourage one another to remember the prosperity with which we have been blessed and to give freely from that abundance.

Join us as we **Step Forward** with our 2024 pledges **on October 29** and then, as an expression of our appreciation, gather with us for brunch together after the church service.



Your Stewardship Committee



October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month, Down Syndrome Awareness Month, National Dental Hygiene Month, National Physical Therapy Month, and Emotional Wellness Month.

COVID is still with us! Handwashing is very important!!!! There's still plenty of COVID test kits available. If you are unavailable to come to the church to get some, I can deliver. The expiration date on the box is August 18, 2023, but the Board of Health has posted that they are good until November 19, 2023. We have enough kits, so if you feel cold-like symptoms, please check.

Happy fall! Stay healthy!

God Bless,

Debbie Pranaitis, Parish Nurse  
cell #: 508-612-4521

## FROM THE DIRECTOR OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The pumpkins are here!!!! Hooray! Our church community is so blessed to host one of the best events to kick off autumn. From unloading the big truck, all the way through Halloween, our lawn provides families and students (young and old) with a picturesque backdrop for a few moments of pure joy! A moment away from the hustle and bustle of life, to simply live in the moment and see beauty all around them. Thank you to the team that works so hard to keep this tradition in motion!!!

Speaking of beautiful traditions at our beautiful church, we have our first Confirmation Class scheduled to begin the last week of September. October will be our first full month of classes. We have 9 students in the class, being taught by me, Michael Schillinger, and Lilly McPherson. I am very excited to begin our first lesson, "What does the Lord's Prayer actually mean?" Did you know there are 7 prayers built into "The Lord's Prayer?" If you want to know a little more, ask a Confirmation student!!!!

Sunday school is in full swing! We have a wonderful group of children this year, thirsty for knowledge about God and the Bible. Although only a few weeks in, we have already added some students that are new to our program. We are currently operating with (2) classes. I am teaching the 6-8<sup>th</sup> graders and Michele Schillinger is teaching our younger students. We also have Lilly McPherson who floats from class to class, as her work schedule allows. We have the capacity to grow into an additional classroom, but as attendance grows, so does the need for volunteers.

I would like to send out a special thanks to Randy Bohn and Lynn Largesse for volunteering to cover Cradle Roll!!!! We are in full swing, fully supported, and ready for the under 4 crowd!!! Spread the word, let all the moms and dads and guardians out there know, the First Congregational Church of Auburn has a safe place for their littles to stay while they worship!

Proverbs 9:9 says: "Instruct the wise and they will be wiser still; teach the righteous and they will add to their learning."

Remember that we are all learning something new. All the generations that are represented in our church community are still learning. I learn from all of you, every week. Every event. We can learn a lot from our children too, if we take the time to get to know them!

Blessings!!!!

~Shannon Hartmann

### OUR CHURCH COOKBOOK



#### **Get Your "From our Pumpkin Patch" Cookbook Here!!**

Need a gift idea for the holiday season? Have you considered the church's cookbook? Each cookbook contains over 200 recipes. At \$15 each, they will make a great Christmas or hostess gift. Also, remember, this is a church fundraiser with proceeds going to the church's general fund.

If you would like to purchase a cookbook, please contact Michele Schillinger at 508-259-2239 and leave a brief message, along with your name and phone number, and she'll be sure to call you back. You may also email her at [library@auburnfirstucc.org](mailto:library@auburnfirstucc.org). Please include "cookbook" in the subject line of your email.



### Here We Grow Preschool



We made it through the first month of the school year, the heat and humidity made it tough, but we survived! As we welcome in the beautiful month of October, the staff and children have settled into a nice routine. We are hoping for some nice weather for a few weeks, before the cold starts; being outside is so good for the body and spirit.

The start of a new school year can be stressful for everyone; for many of our new students this is their first time in the care of someone other than family. They are learning to work in a group, follow directions from new adults as well as valuable self-help skills. At this age children should be encouraged to try to do simple tasks for themselves, such as pulling up their pants, throwing away trash, picking up toys. As they start to bring in coats, etc. we will work with them to put on their own coats using the up and over method.

Currently, we have limited openings in some classes. If you know of someone who is looking for a preschool for their child, please have them call the school at 508-832-8184. The highest compliment we can receive is a referral from family and friends.

During the month of September, the children became familiar with their teachers, new friends, and new surroundings.

Our first fundraiser is currently happening; we are once again working with Bemis Farm in Spencer to build a scarecrow. This event is open to anyone on Saturday and Sunday from 9-4 until October 15. You must pre-register this year at [www.bemis.biz](http://www.bemis.biz) the cost is \$25/ family, (there will be very limited walk-ins for \$30), and you get to build a life size scarecrow in a pot with a small pumpkin and a mum to bring home; they also have a pumpkin path and mini corn maze. There is a flyer posted on the board in Fellowship Hall; this is a great family event. We will also be having another Papa Gino's fundraiser night on October 24 from 4-9.

For your future planning, **we will be doing another Savers clothing drive this year.** We will begin collecting soft items (NO PILLOWS), shoes and books, movies, records, etc. on **November 5 and ending on November 17.** Clothing should be in bags, books and other media can be boxed. Items can be left on the stage in fellowship hall or in the Sunday School room next to Shannon's office. We appreciate all your donations; we couldn't do it without your help.

Starting the first day of school, all the children are taught our prayer that we say before our snack and lunch times. Many of the children teach their families the same prayer at home. I would like to share the prayer with you, and, again, fondly remember Gloria Whitehead for finding this prayer for us.

*Thank You for the World so sweet.*

*Thank You for the food we eat.*

*Thank You for the birds that sing.*

*Thank You God for everything.*

Coming in October: visits from the police and fire departments, and Halloween parade and parties.

Until next month —

Cristi Corey

**Here We Grow** Preschool Director

**FROM THE NOMINATING COMMITTEE**

**1 Peter 4:10-11** <sup>10</sup> Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms. <sup>11</sup> If anyone speaks, they should do so as one who speaks the very words of God. If anyone serves, they should do so with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen.

We can apply these words to all that we've received by God's common grace, including our time, talents and treasure. Peter encourages us that it is God who provides the gift, the grace and the goal of serving others. It is our hope, that in reading this scripture, it gives you the will to proudly serve your God and His church with your individual talents.

Please consider the following committee vacancies (# required to meet FCC By-Laws):

**Board of Deacons:** 9 vacancies (*most critical*)

**Board of Christian Education:** 3 vacancies

**Board of Outreach:** 1 vacancy

**Board of Trustees:** 3 vacancies

**Memorial/Scholarship:** 1 vacancy

**Music:** 3 vacancies

**Nominating:** 2 vacancies

**Stewardship:** 2 vacancies

If you have an interest in sharing your individual talents within our church, please reach out to Michele Schillinger (508.259.2239) or Sheila Skog (978.387.7705).

**THE DISMAS FAMILY FARM**

invites you to their

**FALL HARVEST DAYS**  
**Sat., October 7<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup>**  
**12 - 4 pm**

687 Lincoln Road, Oakham, MA

Join them for hayrides and delicious fall treats at the farm!

Admission Free!

[www.DISMASIFAMILY.ORG](http://www.DISMASIFAMILY.ORG)



**Auburn Historical Society**

**Harvest Supper**

Sat., Oct. 7 at 6 pm

Pakachoag Church  
203 Pakachoag St., Auburn

Dine in or Take out

**Menu: roast pork with stuffing, potatoes, green beans, applesauce and apple crisp for dessert.**

Purchase tickets (only \$15 ea.) in advance at the Museum, 41 South St., Auburn



# Papa Gino's

PIZZERIA



## Here We Grow Preschool

will earn 20% of all qualifying sales  
from orders placed on October 24<sup>th</sup>.

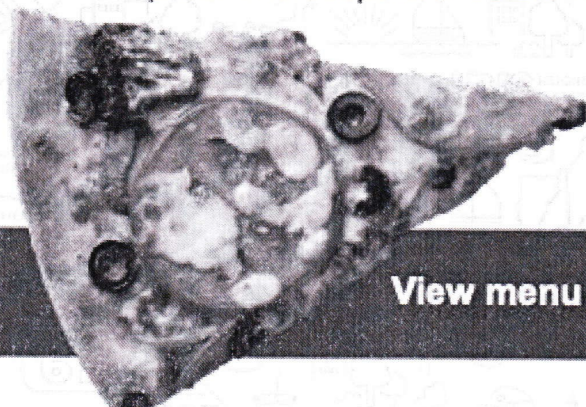


Tuesday, October 24, 2023

4:00 PM - 9:00 PM

Auburn • 459 Southbridge Street • 508-832-6583

- **Walk-in or phone orders:** Mention this fundraiser when you place your order for the organization to get credit for your order.
- **Online orders:** Enter code 19 at the payment screen and then click redeem.
- **Fundraiser orders** are only valid with regular priced menu items and cannot be paired with coupons or deals. Fundraisers are not valid on third party orders.



Valid for all Dine-In, Carry Out,  
Online & Delivery orders!

View menu & place online orders @ [papaginos.com](http://papaginos.com)



# THE PUMPKINS ARE HERE!!!

**Thank you** to everyone who helped to unload the pumpkins on Saturday morning, September 23<sup>rd</sup>.

## WE NOW NEED VOLUNTEERS

to man the pumpkin patch. ANY TIME you can donate is appreciated! We have morning and afternoon shifts to fit most schedules and we're happy to split shifts.

**Ideally, we would like at least 2 people per shift.**

Please check the sign-up sheet in fellowship hall or call/email during church office hours (9 a.m. to 2 p.m.) to have your name added to the schedule. **THANK YOU!**

**OPEN DAILY 10AM — 6PM (OR DUSK)  
THROUGH OCT. 31<sup>ST</sup>.**

*TIDINGS is a monthly publication of*

**First Congregational Church,  
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*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

October 2023						
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**