

Herald of Good TIDINGS

APRIL

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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!'"

Isaiah 40:9

Hello church family,

This Lent has been an extra long one, it seems, as the sun's brightness can't quite overcome the March chill. I know that spring days are ahead, and can see the earliest signs, yet imagining Easter in less than a month seems like a stretch! Alas, we are approaching Holy Week and the most dramatic days of the Christian calendar; the time when we remember Jesus's triumphant entry into Jerusalem as royalty and the radical twists and turns as he humbly washes his disciples' feet on Maundy Thursday, is so violently crucified on Friday, and amazes us all with the Resurrection in the earliest moments of Sunday morning. It's head-spinning, all of it, the joy and the anguish, the pure love and the ghastly betrayal. And yet, these stories from 2000 plus years ago are timeless ones, and we witness them playing out now before us in a myriad of ways. As we approach Holy Week, trudging through Lent with hints of expectation, where are we seeing glimpses of the resurrection hope to guide us?

This is my first Holy Week with you, so I approach with a sense of mystery myself, not entirely sure of your unique traditions. Most importantly, I invite you to engage with as much as you can: Holy Week covers the full spectrum of emotion and spirit, an intensive study into what it means to rise, fall, and rise again with faith. We all need to learn and relearn these lessons again, how to be ushered through the hurts of this world and be open to seeing the living Christ among us.

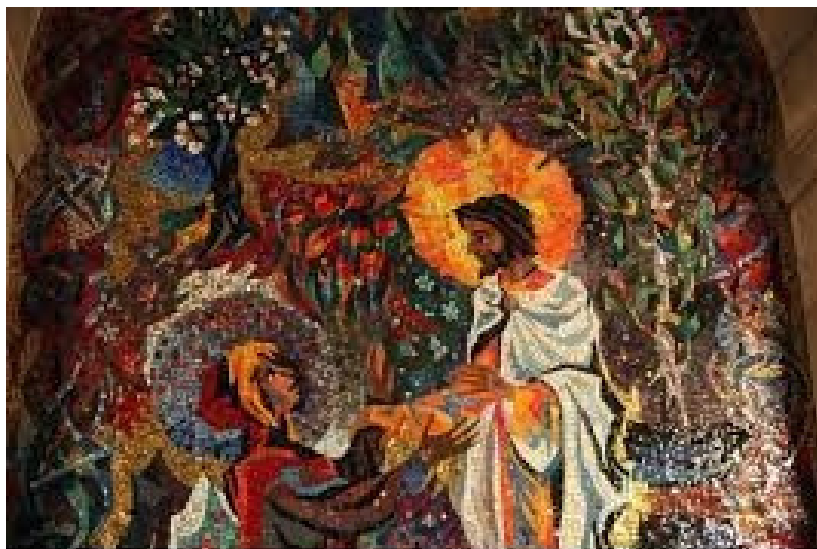


photo © 2013 Tim Fitch

At the moment, I am sketching out the sunrise service, one of my favorites! We are hoping to begin in darkness at 5:45 a.m., and see the sunrise together with the spirit of joy, remembering Mary Magdalene's first witness to Jesus's resurrection. If you haven't experienced a sunrise worship, I encourage you to bundle up and find your way in the darkness to our gathering of warmth – it's spiritually exhilarating to see the sun rise while singing and praying, celebrating the promises of faith together. And, if the rumors are true, there is quite a fine breakfast at The Heritage to follow!

Be mindful, of course, that the joy of the first sun rays are most exceptional when you also have entered the darkness of Maundy Thursday and Good Friday – take the time to grieve beside the cross. You are invited to experience all of it. Christian faith is not a way to avoid suffering, but a path to the sacred in its midst. Bravely situate yourself there, at the foot of the cross, and discover what God teaches you.

Sending you love on your Lenten journey... the resurrection will come, I promise – and more importantly, so does God.
Love,
Pastor Julie

“spring song”
by Lucille Clifton

the green of Jesus
is breaking the ground
and the sweet
smell of delicious Jesus
is opening the house and
the dance of Jesus’ music
has hold of the air and
the world is turning
in the body of Jesus and
the future is possible



Holy Week Schedule

(no meetings during Holy Week)

Palm Sunday Breakfast this year will be pancakes & sausage. We may have scrambled eggs as well, but we'll have to see how much they cost by then! Also available are fruit, cereal and some baked goods.

It is a free-will donation.

Holy Week

April 13: **Palm Sunday** - Breakfast 8:30 a.m.
Worship 10 a.m.

April 17: **Maundy Thursday** - Tenebrae Service 7 p.m.

April 18: **Good Friday** - Quiet Prayer 12-3 p.m.

April 20: **Easter** - Sunrise Service 5:45 a.m.
Worship 10 a.m.

New Members

Interested in becoming an official member of our vibrant congregation? Let Pastor Julie know! We will be welcoming in new members on May 18th, and would love to welcome you.



Save the Date!

Women's Retreat -
Saturday, May 10th,
10 a.m.-2 p.m.

Church Yard Sale -
Saturday, June 14th

Saturday Supper -
Saturday, June 7th, 5-7 p.m.
BBQ!!

Mother's Day floral centerpiece - Tuesday evening May 6th. Sally from Herbert Berg florist will again be walking us through making a beautiful Mother's Day centerpiece to enjoy the week of Mother's Day! It will be held on Tuesday May 6 in fellowship hall from 6-8pm. This is not a fundraiser - just a "fun raiser" and the cost is \$30. Please sign up in fellowship hall and join us for a fun evening!

Ladies, please mark your calendars for the next **Women's Fellowship meeting on Saturday, April 12th, 9-11 a.m. in fellowship hall.**



April is Alcohol Awareness Month, Distracted Driving Awareness Month, National Autism Awareness Month, National Child Abuse Prevention Month, and Stress Awareness Month. Please keep these in your thoughts and prayers during the month.

Happy Spring! Happy Easter to all.
God Bless! Debbie Pranaitis. Parish Nurse

2025 ANNUAL CHURCH YARD SALE

Once again, we will be holding our annual yard sale on Saturday June 14, 2025 from 8 am to 1 pm. Our "plant ladies" will be in full swing with their plant sale, and we will also be having a church table hosted by Cindy Dube and friends. The trustees will again be cooking up hot dogs and hamburgers etc. under the "big top", and the ladies of women's fellowship will be hosting a coffee and bake sale table.

The cost for the event is the same. \$25 per space (\$20 for church members) and \$5 to rent a table, as long as they last (we have a limited amount of long tables). Reservations may be made with Cindy in the church office, who will also take payment due in full by June 7th!!

The process is the same. Vendors need to check in anytime after 6 a.m., unload their vehicles, and move them to the town hall parking lot by 7:45 a.m., as we will be blocking off the parking lots.

Parking is only allowed on the sidewalk side of church street and central street, the town hall parking lot, and there will be 2 handicap spaces available across from the plant ladies.

CHURCH YARD SALE



How may I help you ask? There will be a clipboard in fellowship hall with a yard sale cover sheet that holds various sign-up sheets for volunteers. We will need help on Friday 6/13 at 6:00 p.m. to carry out the tables and set up, and we hope to have the muscles from the scout troop to assist us. There is also a sign-up sheet for breaking down on 6/14 beginning at 1 p.m., hopefully with those able-bodied scouts to assist. Another sign-up sheet will be to assist the ladies at the coffee and bake sale table, and still another for all you bakers out there (guidelines are on the sign-up sheet).

This is one of our major fundraising events and we hope we will have plenty of participation by the members of the church so we can be as successful as we have been in the past! Hope to see you there!!

Thank you! Paula Bigelow



It is never too early to think Plants! As you survey your yard, think what you can dig up, divide, or start for the sale. Again, Christine at **Johnson Greenhouse**, 71 Whittemore St, Leicester, is donating many, many plants.

If you need anything before the sale, please stop by **Johnson Greenhouse**.

Thank you,
The Plant Ladies



CHURCH TABLE RETURNS TO YARD SALE!!! DONATIONS NEEDED

We are bringing back the church's own yard sale table. All proceeds from this table will be added to the grand total for the day. What we need from you is your good "stuff" that you no longer need or use. Household goods, linens, outgrown kids soccer shoes and other sports items, tools and garden tools, books and puzzles, baby items (no clothing), small appliances such as mixers, hair dryers and clocks or whatever else you think might interest someone. We just ask that everything be clean and in good working order. We will also accept wood furniture, small tables, chairs etc. If you have any doubts about what will accept give me a call or text me. You can even send me a photo. **Please don't bring anything you would not buy yourself due to its condition or appearance.**

DO NOT donate any TVs, monitor, oversized microwaves, stuffed furniture, clothing and VCR tapes.



YARD SALE
DONATIONS
NEEDED

CHURCH YARD SALE

It would be helpful if you could drop off your donations the day before, after 12 noon. If need be, you may begin dropping off your donations the day after Children's Sunday. Leave them in the first classroom on the right when you go down the stairs. This can be done during church office hours.

As long as the weather cooperates, we will begin unboxing items as they arrive on Friday afternoon and would love to have some helping hands. If you care to help staff this table the day of the yard sale that would be warmly welcomed as well.

Please do not hesitate to call me if you have any questions about donating an item, you would be surprised as to what might sell, as long it is clean and works!

Thanks in advance for all your help with our Church Table.
Cindy Dube chairperson for this table (only)
774-238-0260

WHERE ARE THE SIGN-UP SHEETS???

In order to try to move people into Fellowship Hall in an easier manner, I have moved the sign-up sheets to the first round table inside the door. You will find **Altar Flowers, Greeters, Readers, and other sign-ups there.** I'll also have paper copies of the weekly emails for those who do not get them digitally. I am asking people to check the church directory at my table as well so that we know that you're getting all of the information you want and need from the church. **Visit me at my table! -Cindy**

Upcoming Opportunities

FLORAL WORKSHOP

Create a Mother's Day floral centerpiece on **Tuesday evening May 6th**. Sally from Herbert Berg florist will again be walking us through making a beautiful Mother's Day centerpiece to enjoy the week of Mother's Day! It will be held on Tuesday May 6 in fellowship hall from 6-8 p.m. This is not a fundraiser - just a "fun raiser" and the cost is \$30. Please sign up in fellowship hall and join us for a fun evening!



TIP-TOE THROUGH THE TULIPS

A group of us from the Woman's Fellowship will be taking a road trip to Wicked Tulips Flower Farm on **Tuesday, April 22**. We will be carpooling leaving from the church parking lot at 9:30 a.m. The cost is \$20 and includes picking 10 tulips each. I have made a reservation for 15 people. If there is more interest, I will see if I can add on extras. Reservations must be paid in advance so please get your money to me, and if paying by check make the check out to Cynthia Dube. Bring a lunch with you and we can picnic on the grounds and enjoy the beautiful sight of over 1 million tulips in one place. Reservations are nonrefundable, but they will work with us for a rain date if the weather is too inclement. A sign-up sheet is in Fellowship Hall. Please indicate if you would be willing to drive, and how many people would fit in your car comfortably. Wicked Tulips Flower Farm has 3 different locations with staggered bloom times for each field. Currently, we are scheduled to go to Johnston, Rhode Island, but may go to Preston, Connecticut, depending on how the tulips are blooming. Both locations are about an hour from Auburn.

Check out their website at wickedtulips.com to learn more, you'll find some beautiful pictures of their fields.

Any questions call me at 774-238-0260.

Cindy Dube



Social Calendar

COFFEE HOUR 2025

- April 6 PSC (Pastoral Support Committee)
- April 13 BOCE (Board of Christian Ed)
- April 20 **Easter - no coffee hour**
- April 27 Outreach Committee
- May 4 Personnel Committee



SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATIONS

We have several scholarships we would like to award to church members seeking to continue their education. Specifically, there are two scholarships dedicated to those studying within the medical field, one scholarship gives preference to those who are musically inclined, and of course, we have several unrestricted scholarships as well. Please look for an application in fellowship hall or email the church office at secretary@auburnfirstucc.org or call 508-832-2845 to request an application.

Applications are due by April 15th.

THURSDAY NIGHT LENTEN SERIES 5:30-7 p.m.

SOUP & SANDWICH PROVIDERS:

- 4/3 Board of Christian Ed. (BOCE)
- 4/10 Outreach Committee

Altar Flowers, Greeters, Readers

Please see Cindy during coffee hour to sign up to donate altar flowers for Sundays this Spring. Cindy will also have sign-up sheets for greeters and readers as well as a copy of our current directory so people can verify that they are on it.

Birthdays and Anniversaries for the TIDINGS

Cindy will also have a sheet for people to sign up to have their birthdays and anniversaries listed in the TIDINGS each month so we can lift everyone up in celebration.



April Birthdays and Anniversaries

- April 5th - Cindy Dube
- April 5th - Mike Dube
- April 9th - Ernie Smith
- April 10th - Haydn McPherson

- April 1st - Ellie & Ed Oleson
- April 26th - Tricia & Reno Gervasi



From around the church

HERE WE GROW PRESCHOOL

First, we want to wish everyone a Happy, healthy Easter this month. Here We Grow will be closed on April 18 for Good Friday and then April 20-24 for vacation week.

It feels like time is flying by, I can't believe it is April already, our school year will be ending before we know it. Every year I look forward to seeing the flowers and trees bloom and the longer days, and we are all dreaming about summer vacation.

Warmer weather also means it is time to clean out the closets. We will be having another clothing drive at the end of May, once again we will be taking any textiles and books. The exact dates will be coming soon.

We are now selling tickets for our calendar giveaway, once again tickets are \$10 each. Thank you to everyone who purchases tickets for the calendar giveaway. We will begin drawing winners on May 1st- Good luck to all!

Mandie Carlson for Mandie C's cookies will be selling Easter treats on Wed April 16 to benefit HWG, if you would like to preorder cookies we will leave a flyer in the office.

We have limited availability left for the 2025-26 school year. If you know anyone looking, please send them our way. Children can start school at 2.9, do not need to be potty trained or live in Auburn. We are happy to offer tours during the school day as well as evenings and weekends.

Have a safe and healthy month.

Cristi Corey - Here We Grow Preschool Director

CINDY MOWER - NEW CHURCH SECRETARY

After a few weeks in the office, I am learning my way around the space, and starting to remember names. Thank you all for welcoming me into the Secretary position here at church. I moved to the area from New Hampshire last summer to be closer to my mom, Fran Mower, and started meeting her here at church for worship on Sunday mornings. My children Anja (14) and Alistair (10) live with me and our 2 cats, Gigi and Stella, in Shrewsbury, where my little country kids are discovering the world of suburbia!

I know that I bring to this position a knowledge from working in two other congregational churches, and that I use skills learned there as well as marketing learned through my Mary Kay business to keep up with the ever-changing world.

I am also a musician and avid musical theater fan.

I look forward to working closely with all of you. Feel free to stop by the office to see me on Sundays, or Monday, Tuesday, Thursday or Friday during office hours, 9:30-2:30.



SUNDAY WORSHIP & SUNDAY SCHOOL 10AM
 Office Hours Mon-Fri 9:30-2:30PM
 508-832-2845

APRIL

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First Congregational Church
 128 Central St.
 Auburn, MA 01501
 Web: www.auburnfirstucc.org

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
6 10 a.m.: Communion Sun. 11:30-12:30: Bible Study	7 4:30-6:30 p.m.: Girl Scouts 6:30 p.m.: HWG Board	8 9 a.m.: Auburn Comfort Blankets (ACB) 12:30-2 p.m.: Bible study	9 6 p.m.: Choir 6 p.m.: BOCE 6:30-8 p.m.: Cub Scouts	10 9 a.m.: ACB 5-6:30 p.m.: Girl Scouts 5:30 p.m.: Lenten Series 7-8:30 p.m.: Boy Scouts 7 p.m.: Deacons 7 p.m. Trustees	11	12 9-11 a.m.: Women's Fellowship
13 Palm Sunday 8:30 a.m.: Breakfast 10 a.m.: Sunday Worship & Sunday School 11:30 a.m.: Music Cmte	14 5:45-7:15 p.m.: Brownies	15 9 a.m.: Auburn Comfort Blankets (ACB)	16 6 p.m.: Choir	17 Maundy Thursday 9 a.m.: ACB 7 p.m.: Tenebrae Service	18 Good Friday HWG Closed 12-3 p.m.: Quiet Prayer	19 10 a.m.: Bell Choir
20 Easter 5:45 a.m.: Sunrise Service 10 a.m.: Sunday Worship & Sunday School	21 School Vacation Week	22 9 a.m.: (ACB) Auburn Comfort Blankets	23 6 p.m.: Choir	24 9 a.m.: ACB 7 p.m. Church Council	25	26 10 a.m.: Bell Choir
27 10 a.m.: Sunday Worship & Sunday School	28 5:45-7:15 p.m.: Brownies	29 9 a.m.: Auburn Comfort Blankets (ACB) 12:30-2 p.m.: Bible study	30 6 p.m.: Choir 6:30-8 p.m.: Cub Scouts	<p>COFFEE HOUR HOSTS</p> <p>4/6 PSC 4/20 Easter—no coffee hour</p> <p>4/13 Board of Ed (BOCE) 4/27 Outreach</p>		