



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,

Please join us for a very special worship service on October 25. We will have the director of Dismas House and some of its residents sharing the good news of that program. The Outreach ministry team is hoping to make a substantial contribution to Dismas from the Sibley Fund and the sermon that day will help lay the groundwork for the congregation's education. The congregation will be asked to gather for a special meeting for that discussion late this fall.

Dismas House was named for the Good Thief crucified with Jesus, who asked for forgiveness and was granted paradise. The mission of Dismas is the reconciliation of homeless, former prisoners and society through the creation of supportive communities. Dismas House welcomed its first residents in 1988, and since then has helped hundreds of former prisoners reconcile with society. Dismas provides a range of effective services, from the emergency (food, shelter, and clothing), to the longer term (civil legal assistance, recovery services for drugs and alcohol, and employment and housing). Most importantly, what sets Dismas aside is the small-scale family environment. The staff and volunteers strive to make Dismas a family by incorporating sit-down dinners prepared in the Dismas kitchen by residents and volunteers from area churches, families with dogs, and area students. There is no "sign" outside our door that says, "Dismas, home for ex-prisoners." Instead, it is a family home like any other family in the community, working through issues together, struggling over the long term to create an organization in which interpersonal relationships are the foundation of our success, where former prisoners feel welcome, and thus "buy into" the Dismas mission of reconciliation.

In its twenty plus years, Dismas has been fortunate to open the doors to new homes. Specifically, Dismas opened the doors to Almost Home in 2006, and the Father John Brooks House in 2007. At Almost Home, 12 parolees participated every four months in a rigorous morning-to-night reentry program set in a Dismas-style home. At Brooks House, graduates of Dismas and other homeless folks live in their own apartments or shared apartments in exchange for sobriety, employment, and fees for the upkeep of the building. Due to economic setbacks at the state level, Almost Home was forced to close its doors on July 1, 2009. Dismas has been diligently pursuing a new program, the Dismas Farm, for the past year and half, and this project will now serve as a replacement for Almost Home. The Dismas Farm will remove from the inner city homeless former prisoners, house them at the farm, and they will participate in upkeep of a working vegetable and wool farm, as well as recovering from drugs and moving towards a sustainable lifestyle. Churches will enrich the spiritual and social needs of the residents, all the while preserving a 10 acre working farm in rural central Massachusetts.

Dave McMahon has been the co-Executive Director of Dismas house for the past 12 years. A graduate of the University of Notre Dame, and a former fellow in non-profit management at the Kennedy School of Government Hauser Center, Dave is convinced that with the right community support, people in need released from our jails can be a success for themselves and our communities.

October Birthdays include:
Eric Rockwood - October 21st
Carolyn Slongwhite - October 21st
George DuHamel - October 27th

Happy Birthday!



On October 8th Rich and Jean McPherson will be celebrating their wedding anniversary - Congratulations!

Happy Anniversary to George and Laura DuHamel who will celebrate their special day on October 31st.

Joyful Noyse Schedule

10/4, 11 & 18 11:15 a.m. rehearsal
10/25 9:15 a.m. rehearsal
 You Are Good

Please note the following address change:

Mrs. Dorothy Heath
Ashland Farm
700 Chickering Road, Apt. #367
North Andover, MA 01845

Dorothy would love to hear from you.

FALL FESTIVAL

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 17TH
AT THE FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
128 CENTRAL STREET, AUBURN

Please plan to join us for a day filled with fun activities including:

Bake Sale Kids' Activities

Candy Haunted House Making 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Chicken Barbeque - noon to 4 p.m.

Althea Grotto Band - 2 to 3 p.m.

Pumpkin Patch - 9 a.m. 'til dusk

There's sure to be something for everyone - see you there!



Visions and Dreams

Reflections from your Interim Pastor, The Reverend Mark Seifried

I will pour out my Spirit on every kind of people: your sons will prophecy, also your daughters;
Your young men will see visions, your old men shall dream dreams ...
I'll pour out my Spirit on those who serve me, men and women both ...
And whoever calls out for help to me, God, will be saved.

(Excerpts are from Acts 2:17-21. Translation is from *The Message* by Eugene Peterson.)

The above passage comes from Peter's speech to the gathered assembly in Jerusalem at Pentecost, the day the Holy Spirit birthed the church of Jesus Christ. To me, this is one of the most significant passages for church-going Christians because it contains the promise that *all* who serve God will be filled with the Holy Spirit. Do you believe that? Do we believe that? I wonder.

Our spiritual memory doesn't go back very far. Some know we were the church of the Pilgrims, Puritans, and Congregationalists but few really claim their religious heritage came from Jerusalem - where Jesus was crucified and resurrected and where the church was born. We need to remember these events and the gifts that came with them just as surely as we remember our place in Auburn's history ... Actually, we could forego some of our memory of American heritage so we can make "Christian" our first level of association. If we could do that, perhaps we could be more open to the work of the Holy Spirit. If we could do that, perhaps we could experience a rebirth with the vim and vigor of Pentecost.

I am convinced that unless members of the church claim the gifts of the Spirit that we will slumber in spiritual lethargy. Those gifts as proclaimed by the apostle Paul are sharing spiritual wisdom, spiritual knowledge, spiritual faith, spiritual healing, working miracles, prophecy, discernment of spirits, speaking and interpreting tongues. Until men and women use those gifts of the Spirit, dream the dreams of God, and envision a future built by God we will be mired in spiritual muck.

The late Henri Nouwen said, "You are Christian only so long as you constantly pose critical questions to the society you live in ... so long as you stay unsatisfied with the status quo and keep saying that a new world is yet to come."

Perhaps the church has become too comfortable to question the status quo. Perhaps we are emblematic of the status quo. Or, perhaps we have lost the faith to say, "A new world is yet to come." I wonder.

I say all this not to claim that we are doing things wrong in the church, but to say we need to reclaim that which has been our Christian birthright. We need to pray about the church and for the church so that we can talk about the visions and dreams for the church that God reveals to us. It is in listening for God's word to us that the dreams and visions come. It is in hearing God's word that we understand just how we are caught up in the status quo. It is then that we understand just how much we need to proclaim and act toward a new world that is yet to come ... a world built upon Christ's peace, love and mercy.

Note: *I will be offering six sessions on Tuesday evenings at 7:00 and Friday mornings at 10:00, beginning October 13 and October 16, so that we might practice being a spiritual community together. We will use different practices of prayer ranging from Centering Prayer to Lectio Divina, where scriptures guide the meditations of our hearts. During each session, we will have a time of discussion on how the Holy Spirit is speaking to us about our personal and communal lives. Please let me know (phone call, email, or verbally) of your interest in advance so that I can have materials prepared for all participants.*

Let's keep imagining the new world God is preparing for us and let's pray about our role in birthing it. Let us call out for help from God ... and be saved.



Happy Fall! With the fall, comes the flu season. I have information on the flu, H1N1 (Swine flu) and vaccinations on the Health Table in Fellowship Hall. I get my information from the CDC (Center for Disease Control) in Atlanta, GA. I also get information from the infection control nurse at Fairlawn Rehab Hospital and she gets her info from the infectious disease department at UMass. Hopefully, I have the latest info and will share it with you.

Recently there was a whole page article in the Worcester Telegram about the vaccine to prevent shingles. It is ZOSTAVAX. Please take a copy from the table. Parishioners who have had shingles will tell you that they are VERY painful! This vaccine is for people over 60 years of age who have had chicken pox.

October is National Breast Cancer Awareness Month, Healthy Lung Month, Halloween Safety Month, National Dental Hygiene Month, National Chiropractic Month, and National Physical Therapy Month.

October 4-10 is Fire Prevention Week and October 5th is National Child Health Day.

Enjoy this beautiful season.

God Bless!

Deborah Pranaitis
Parish Nurse



"Before I tell you what happened, Mom, remember...The Lord will never give you more than you can handle."

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

- | | | |
|--------------|---|----------------------------------|
| 10/4 | ~ | Historians/Memorial Committee |
| 10/11, 10/18 | ~ | Stewardship Committee |
| 10/25, 11/1 | ~ | Prudential Committee |
| 11/8, 11/15 | ~ | Financial Secretaries/Treasurers |

Here We Grow Preschool



We are into the second month of **Here We Grow's** 21st school year. It is the end of September and we still have a few criers. Sometime in October the children will have stopped crying and be settled into a nice routine. I will let you know next month if it happens or if it was just wishful thinking on my part.

Here We Grow began the school year with 48 three-year-olds and 78 four and five-year-olds. At this time we have a few openings in the p.m. 3's class. If you know of someone who would like to send their child to preschool, have them call the school at 508-832-8184.

During the month of September the children became familiar with their teachers, new friends and new surroundings. They had a tour of the church offices, rooms and sanctuary. This reinforces how large a church this is.

Each child had homework the second week of school. Continuing on with one of our traditions, the child created a picture page of their families and added it to their classroom family album. It is one of the ways we become familiar with all the families attending HWG. It is also a great way for the children to open up to someone, just by talking about their families.

We had a great parent turnout for the three Parent Orientations which were held on the first days of school. Many questions were answered and hopefully any fears were put to rest. The parents also had the opportunity to pick up all forms needed for their children's files before the first day of school. Thank you to Denise Jobin for helping those parents out.

I would also like to thank Craig Premo, Wayne Prouty, David Sampson & Stan MacPhee for all the help in preparing HWG for another school year. We wouldn't have been ready without their continued support. So THANKS guys.

Upcoming events for the month of October: No more criers?, Apple Orchard field trips, visits from the police and fire departments, and Halloween parade and parties.

Until next month, stay healthy and enjoy the beautiful weather we have been having.

Dawn Murphy
Director

Here We Grow Preschool

LEDGER

1773-1786

A few years ago I read and copied a ledger that was stored in the town hall basement. I don't believe this book has been read in the last two hundred years. It is a complete record of the step-by-step decisions made by our men in building our meetinghouse and forming our town.

The following is just one of a series of excerpts from these writings.

George DuHamel and Paula Lubin, Church Historians

At a meeting of the Inhabitants of the South Parish in Worcester & Towns adjacent held the 12 day of January 1778.

- Art. 1 Chose Mr. Charles Richardson moderator for S'd meeting.
- Art. 2 Voted that Mr. Peter Hardy be added to the Committee appointed in behalf of the Parish to petition the General Court for our incorporation into a Township & that S'd Committee be Directed to attend on the General Court Committee appointed to Establish Boundaries in all manner in behalf of S'd Parish, also voted that Mr. Jacob Stephens provide for the Court Committee.
- Art. 3 Voted to confer the Pew No. 35 to Mr. Oliver Curtice in Lieu of a Pew No. 56 which is Revert back to the parish.
- Art. 4 Voted that those persons Named on a plan of the inside of the meetinghouse in the Parish Book Register as living owners of Pew ground in S'd House and their substitutes shall be still & ever intitled to S'd Parish in the order & rank of the prizes on S'd Plat set fourth provided they shall Compromise with Mr. Carter the undertaker for the work to mak him pay Equally Good to the current value of money at the Day he undertuek S'd work and Such of the S'd owners as shall neglect to agree & compound afore S'd within 2 weeks from this Day shall by the Parish be considered as havin to all intents & purposes forfeited any further pretentions to S'd Pew spots and S'd pew spots shall Revert to the Parish & they be com Responsible to Mr. Carter on the terms above.
Respecting pay.
- Art. 5 Voted this article pass over as being Suppreceded in or by the 2 article.

Attest Charles Richardson, Modirator

Charles Richardson

A true Record from the minutes
Attest Samuel Eddy, Parish Clark

Samuel Eddy

From the Director of Religious Education

Rally day was a success! We were able to see old friends and meet a few new ones. The children had a wonderful morning filled with crafts, stories and ice cream sundaes.

We are still looking for a few people to help out in cradle roll and the classrooms. Thank you to Shannon Premo for covering cradle roll in September and Charlotte Steffen for volunteering for October.

The Youth group and Family group activities are in the works; please look for information in the bulletin for October activities.

I hope you all have a blessed month and enjoy the fall foliage.

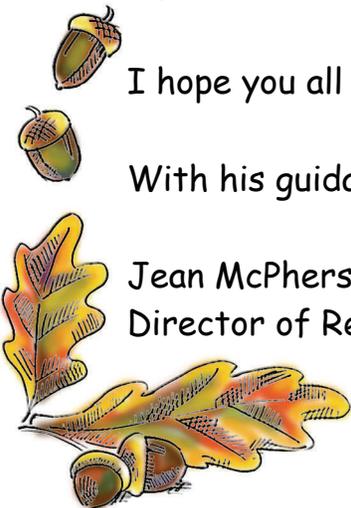
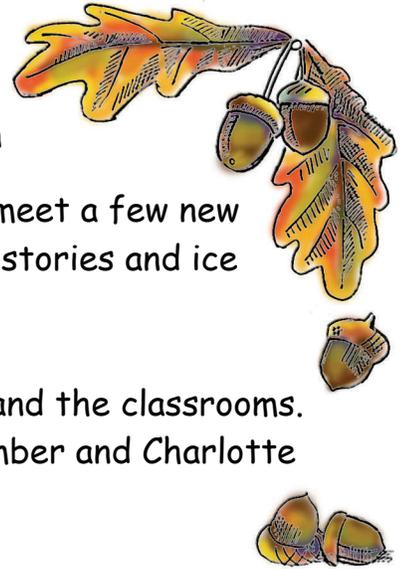
With his guidance we serve,

Jean McPherson
Director of Religious Education

The Outreach Committee and I will be providing lunch for the congregation of Worcester Fellowship on Sunday November 8th on the common at City Hall. We are requesting monetary donations for lunch fixings, new white socks and t-shirts. Of course, anyone, and everyone is welcome and encouraged to join us for worship and to share the meal with Worcester Fellowship. Please see me or any member of the Outreach Committee.

Worcester Fellowship is a congregation of homeless and less fortunate people in the City of Worcester. Thank you for your help and support of this important ministry.

Jen Bohn



VOLUNTEERS



NEEDED

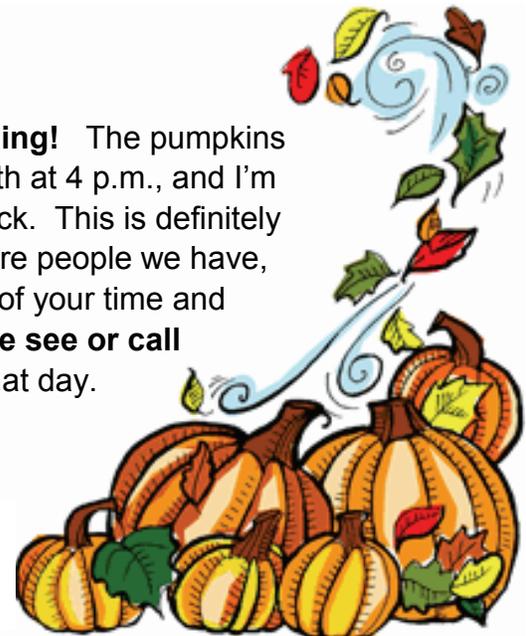
We are still looking for people to take part in our Fall Festival on October 17th. I want to thank Garry Mahlert for taking on the task of advertising; Linda & Deb Mahlert for running a bake sale; Bob Murray for putting on the Chicken Bar -B-Que and Cliff Peterson for coming out of retirement to lead the Althea Grotto Band from 2 -3 that day and Outreach for making the candy haunted houses. Your willingness to help is GREATLY APPRECIATED, as the saying goes "many hands make light work." We would still like someone to take on the wee -bee pumpkin painting table or any other creative idea you think might work on that day. We need EVERYONE'S help to make this a success. **Everyone** can do **something** to help.

Jen Bohn

We are also in need of volunteers to man the pumpkin patch. The pumpkin patch will be open everyday from October 12th through October 31st. **Please see the sign-up sheets in Fellowship Hall** if you're able to donate a few (or more) hours of your time. Thanks so much!

The pumpkins are coming! The pumpkins are coming! The pumpkins are scheduled to be delivered on Sunday, October 11th at 4 p.m., and I'm looking for a lot of strong bodies to help unload the truck. This is definitely a case of MANY hands making LIGHT work. The more people we have, the easier it is. I'm only asking for a couple hours of your time and it's FUN. **I need a firm commitment so please see or call me at 508-832-0428 if you can help on that day.**

Jen Bohn



Library Tidings

by Gloria Whitehead

One Small Candle - the Pilgrims' First Year in America by Thomas J. Fleming. While straightening fiction books in the adult library the aforementioned title initiated a second look. Though a portion of this book also appeared under the same title in the December 1963 *Reader's Digest*, time could not have altered its historic contents too much. The tales of the trials and tribulations of two extreme cultures are only a portion of Fleming's skill in portraying the unique achievements of the Pilgrims, their separation of church and state, etc. and their warmth mixed with occasional humor. It concludes with the first Thanksgiving and William Bradford's progressive words, "As one small candle may light a thousand so the light kindled here has shone unto many . . ."

Could a revisit to this historical period add a meaningful portion of history to your pumpkin pie or light a few memorable Thanksgiving candles for you? It's only October so *One Small Candle* should be able to be "lit" (borrowed) by several families.

The children's library holds a wealth of Bibles for children of all ages. At some point (and if we fail to follow through be SURE to remind us) we'll make a list of these Bibles with close age appropriate notations. The two newest additions (which are beautiful hardcovers) are:

1. The *Flap and Tab Bible* is designed to meet the specific needs of preschoolers by providing flaps for interactive learning and hand-eye coordination, tabs to build early reference skills, sturdy pages to help increase small-muscle control and 15 stories to expand Bible knowledge. The flap, once lifted, reveals a picture and the tabs indicate the subject matter in a section.
2. *On My Own Reader Bible* consists of 75 stories based on the New Living Translation which is just right for beginning readers. The specific needs that are emphasized are: layout that supports reading skill-building, large print and white space between lines, appropriate story length for primary-grade learners, 75 Bible stories selected with new readers in mind.

Another in the *Mystery and the Minister's Wife* series entitled *How the Heart Runs* by Anne Marie Rodgers has been gifted by Gloria Beauregard. This series is expanding in popularity as it's easy reading and can be a "stop and start" delight. Each volume has its own identity - no waiting for the return of the previous volume.

As you look at our church altar, focus on the quilt square that is placed on center from the altar cloth.

Remember how it was dedicated at some time during the summer? Since that time a spiral bound book has been placed in the adult library and its title is, *Immerse Yourself in Prayer*. Open the book to quilts #7 & #8. Quilt #7 is the prayer that accompanied the quilt our ladies made, Quilt #8 is the prayer that accompanied the quilt square we received from St. John's United Church of Christ of Evans City, PA. The huge expansion of creating quilts has found another way of warmth, as UCC quilters exchange a prayer and square with another church. Just be certain to return this great creation of hearts and minds to the adult library.

A message from your Stewardship Committee...

In July, the Stewardship Committee sent out a letter regarding our current financial situation. To sum it up, in 2008, we received 144 pledges totaling \$131,000. This year we received 116 pledges totaling \$121,000. We lost 28 or approximately 20% of those who pledged last year. Also, consider the fact that the church budget for 2009 began with an \$18,600 deficit based on a figure of \$123,000 income from pledges.

Since our letter went out in July, we have received such positive feedback that, at this point in time, with 3 months to go, we are sitting at an approximate \$1,500 deficit. That's wonderful news for our church! If this positive response continues throughout our 2010 pledge campaign, then our church profile we submit to the UCC in our search for a new pastor should be favorable. Consider that our church's profile needs to include what we can offer a full or part time minister. And our position in what we can offer needs to be understood before we can make an earnest invite for a pastor to consider our church as his or her home.

As you consider your pledge for 2010, please keep in mind the teachings from the Gospel of Mark where Jesus sat opposite the Treasury and observed the crowd putting money into the treasury. Many rich people put in large sums; whereas, a poor widow came and put in two small copper coins, which are worth a penny. Jesus then called his disciples and said to them, "Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put in more than all those who are contributing to the treasury. For all of them have contributed out of their abundance; but she, out of her poverty, has put in everything she had, all she had to live on."

It's interesting to hear the different views of what one should give to the church. For the devout Jews in Jesus' time, and for some of us today, the idea of tithing - giving 10% of what one earns - wasn't something to consider or question, it was what God wanted and needs us to do. Yet, many of us do not.

We frequently read about thinking "outside of the box" to meet an extraordinary situation. We need to think "outside of the box" about our giving for 2010. If the numbers we have truly reflect our position and we truly want our church to thrive and continue its various ministries, then we really need to pray long and hard about our pledging for the next year because that is what we will base our church's profile around.

The following chart will show what we can offer a new pastor as his/her annual total compensation package and what increase we would need across the board in order to make such an offer. The figures below reflect an increase based on a starting point of the approved 2009 budgeted income for pledges which, for this year, left us with an overall deficit of \$18,600. The Total Annual Pastoral Package includes Salary, Housing Allowance, FICA, Health Insurance, Life Insurance, etc.

Total Annual Pastoral Package	Estimated Pledge Required	\$\$ Increase	% increase
\$80,000	\$141,600	\$18,600	15.12%
\$75,000	\$136,600	\$13,600	11.06%
\$70,000	\$131,600	\$ 8,600	6.99%
\$65,000	\$126,600	\$ 3,600	2.9%

Our theme for the 2010 pledge campaign is:

~~ Inspiring Generosity ~~

How has God inspired you to be generous in His name?

Come Consecration Sunday, October 18th, 2009, we pray the congregation will have a renewed understanding of the spirit and rewards of giving.

Respectfully yours,

Your Stewardship Committee,

Ron Klaucke (Chair), Mike Dube and Michele Schillinger

Stewardship Message

Catching the Bouquet

The point is this: the one who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and the one who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. 2 Corinthians 9:6

A clearer understanding of the apostle Paul through a ... DJ?

I have celebrated and attended many weddings – large and small, fancy and simple. I approach disk jockeys with healthy suspicion. Some think the wedding is about them. Some sound bored. Some (mistakenly) think they are funny. A good DJ is worth his or her weight in cake.

At last Saturday's wedding every banquet table had a floral arrangement. One of the mothers is a florist and, themed to a Hawaiian honeymoon, the flowers were wired into pineapple shapes. The DJ announced that we were going to play a game to see who would take each arrangement home. One person at each table should volunteer a dollar bill. As he played the music, we passed the dollar bill around the table clockwise. When the music stopped, the person holding it was thrilled.

"No," said the DJ, "That's not the winner. Now pass it counterclockwise." He played another tune. The music stopped and the new bill-holder was excited.

"Now," said the DJ, "everyone who is holding money, come and bring it to the couple, and the person who originally gave the dollar bill can take home the flowers."

Wonderful and surprising rewards come to us when we give without expecting a return, when we simply "volunteer" our time, energy, skills, care, and financial resources. This is true in our work, family and personal lives and it is certainly true in the life of our churches.

October 2009

God is still speaking,

**UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST**



This resource is a free service and is made possible by your gifts to Our Church's Wider Mission.

CALLING ALL VETERANS

Boy Scout Troop 101 is looking to honor those who have served our country at a special Veterans' Day ceremony to be held here in Fellowship Hall on Veterans' Day, November 11th at 6:30 p.m. If you're a veteran, please call George at 774-239-2240.

Please join the Stewardship and Pastoral Search Teams for an important discussion regarding the compensation package for our next settled pastor.

We need the wisdom of the whole congregation as to how we move forward and how much financial support we can expect. We cannot advertise the position or move forward with the search until then.

This will be the crux of the agenda for the meeting **after worship on October 4**. In the meantime, let us pray for God's wisdom and inspiration.



OUTREACH NEWS

The Outreach Committee is very pleased to announce that the "HOPE FOR HOUSING" project has sold \$9,125 worth of grocery cards since May 11, 2009. Five percent equals a probable \$456.25 donated to Hope For Housing. We are pleased to have this response from FCC and we intend to keep it going and hopefully growing.

We had our fundraiser at Uno's in Millbury. Thank you to all who participated. We will let you know our profit when we get the total from Uno's. This is going towards our "Build an Ark" project for Heifer International.

Sue Campbell will be walking the "Crop Walk" on Sunday, October 25, 2009. There will be papers in Fellowship Hall to sponsor her. CROP stands for: Communities Responding to Overcome Poverty.

We will also put out a box for donations to the Worcester Fellowship for new white socks, mittens, & hats. Judy Murphy will be the contact person for the coat and mitten drive for the Goddard School. If you see things on sale, please keep these projects in mind. Thank you for your help and support.

Debbie Pranaitis
Chair

*TIDINGS is a monthly
publication of*

**First Congregational
Church**
128 Central St.
Auburn MA 01501

Phone: (508)832-2845

Web: auburnfirstucc.org



BULK RATE
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Non-Profit Org.
Permit No. 6
Auburn, Mass

October 2009

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