



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

I was a bookish child. Errol School had first, second and third grade in one room, fourth, fifth and sixth in another room. Upstairs was seventh, eighth, ninth and tenth in two rooms; one room for math and science, another for English and history. There was no mandatory kindergarten in those days so our school did not offer it.

Each class sat while a lesson was given to another grade. So you listened to all the lessons three times, once for each year you were in the class room. It made for a good, repetitive learning environment. It also meant I had little homework because I could use the time the teacher was teaching another grade to do my work.

I was the kind of kid who reminded the teacher if she forgot to give us an assignment. When I got bored I would go to the back of the classroom and grab a volume from the World Book or Encyclopedia Britannica and read random articles.

I still do that from time to time online with Wikipedia. It is there I learned that sticks of butter in the Western U.S. are fatter and shorter than Eastern U.S. butter sticks; and European butter is made differently from butter in the U.S. — life saving information I am sure, just not sure how, yet.

Lately my interest has gone to the origin of words. Most Christian languages, French, Italian, name the Festival of the Resurrection after the Passover so Easter is “Pascal.” The Venerable Bede (what a cool name) says Easter was named for Esther the Anglo Saxon goddess of the field whose totem animal is the hare.

Now a hare is not a bunny. A hare is larger, and thought to be faster, hence the tortoise raced a hare, not a rabbit, in the famous Aesop’s fable. A hare is a deadly animal to a farmer. It can ruin a field of crops and is very hard to keep out of a field or garden. A hare is also often hard to hunt, requiring dogs to flush them out and a good shot to hit the fast running hare.

That is the traditional story of the word *Easter*, dating to Bede who lived AD 673–735. Now scholars say that English Easter and German Oster derive from the old German word for resurrection, *aufstehung*. They even claim that the Venerable Bede (seriously, can we start calling people the Venerable Sue, the Venerable John?) was incorrect in stating there was an Anglo Saxon goddess named Esther.

What a wonderful world we live in where someone is spending hours tracing the origin of words. What insight might we get from understanding how a word and its meaning change overtime?

(Continued on page 6)

Palm Sunday/Passion Sunday is April 13th. Our worship service will begin at 10 a.m.

Maundy Thursday Service will be held April 17th at 7 p.m.

Good Friday is April 18th ~ Auburn’s Ecumenical Service will be held here at First Congregational Church at 12:15 p.m.

Easter Sunday is April 20th ~ with our Sunrise Service at 5:30 a.m. at Hillside Cemetery and two worship services - 9:00 a.m. & 10:30 a.m. at the church.

~ **All Are Welcome** ~





April is National Alcohol Awareness Month, National Autism Awareness Month, National Child Abuse Prevention Month, Counseling Awareness Month, National Donate Life Month, Stress Awareness Month, National Humor Month, and National Occupational Therapy Month.

April 2	International Children's Book Day National Day of Hope
April 4-6	Alcohol Free Weekend
April 6-13	National Volunteer Week
April 7	World Health Day
April 7-11	National Youth Violence Prevention Week
April 7-13	National Public Health Week
April 10	Siblings Day
April 13-19	National Library Week
April 22	Earth Day
April 24	Take your Daughters and Sons to Work Day
April 26-May3	National Infant Immunization Week

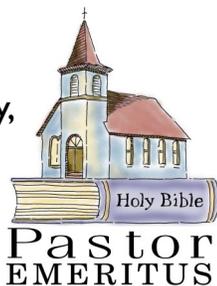
I have recently placed information about End of Life issues on the Health Table in Fellowship Hall. There is a booklet about "Starting the Conversation." There are also "File of Life" folders to take and fill out before putting them on your refrigerator. (You can put it on the side of the fridge, if you don't want it on the front.) If there is an emergency, the First Responders will look for this information and it can save a lot of time!

There are cans of Glucerna in the closet at the end of the educational wing. If you know of anyone that uses this supplemental drink, please take it. It expires July of 2014 and I'd hate to have to throw it away! There is also medical equipment in the closet to take at any time.

Happy Spring! Happy Easter!
Debbie Pranaitis, Parish Nurse

EMERITUS SUNDAY

Mark your calendars for Sunday, April 27th, as Rev. Ken Knox returns to the pulpit for Emeritus Sunday.



*To My First Congregational Friends,
Thank you for celebrating my
50th Birthday with me.*

*Love,
Suzanne (Kress)*

To you, our friends at Auburn First Congregational Church –

We were so pleased to receive your greetings in honor of our 70th wedding anniversary. To think that so many have joined in the celebration of our very important date really touched our hearts.

Thank you for being part of it.

*Love & blessings,
The Slongwhites –
Donald & Carolyn*

Happy Birthday to:

Ernie Smith - April 9th
Haydn McPherson - April 10th
Bob MacLeod - April 27th



Happy Anniversary to:

Don & Marion Woodcock who will be married 63 years as of April 8th and to Don & Jen Temple whose special day falls on April 15th.

SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATIONS

Applications are available in Fellowship Hall, and in the church office for anyone interested in applying for a scholarship. **Don't forget, applications are due by April 15th.**

We will be starting a new **CONFIRMATION CLASS** on September 7 for youth 8th grade and up. We will have an informational meeting after worship on **June 1**. If that time does not work for you, please call the church office (508) 832-2845 to arrange another time to meet.

Coffee Hour Hosts

4/6 ~ Prudential Committee
4/13 ~ Board of Trustees
4/20 ~ Easter - no coffee hour
4/27, 5/4 ~ Memorial/Scholarship, Nominating & Historian

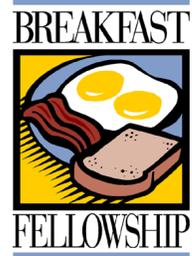
Outreach will be hosting this year's Palm Sunday Breakfast on Sunday, April 13th at 8:00 A.M. The breakfast is FREE, but a free-will donation will be accepted.

Our guest speaker will be from Auburn Youth and Family Services. Please join us to hear about what's new and happening at AYFS and enjoy a time of fellowship on Palm Sunday.

There will be a sign up sheet in fellowship hall so that we plan for the appropriate number of people.

EVERYONE is welcome and we look forward to seeing you there!

The Outreach Committee



SERMON TOPICS FOR APRIL

4/6 Communion Sunday - "Doubting Thomas Is Willing to Die, but Cannot Believe Jesus Will Come Back"
4/13 Palm & Passion Sunday
4/20 Easter - 5:30a.m. Sunrise: "Light & Dawn" 9:00 & 10:30a.m. at church: "Peter & John, the Fast Wait for the Slow"
4/27 Emeritus Sunday: Rev. Ken Knox - "Heaven"

Children's Time:

4/6 "Do you go when it is important?"
4/20 Easter Sunday - "He Commanded Us to Preach"
4/13 Palm & Passion Sunday
4/27 "Balm"

LIBRARY TIDINGS by Gloria Whitehead

The weeks of Easter are quickly flying by. Have you thought about its special significance and maybe even formed a special prayer that you've been sharing with your family? Or have the days been just the same old routine? If it's been half n' half, that's a good start. So give God a chance to encourage and help you by browsing through the Easter book displays in both of the church libraries.

Actually, spring is here! So let's whistle a delightful tune and refresh our outlook as we enter this season of rebirth and growth.

Your Church Librarians



The **Fall Fair Extravaganza** is beginning to take shape. Thank you to all who have already signed up and expressed an interest in the fair. That being said, we still need **MANY MORE** volunteers!

With the foot traffic that is generated by the annual pumpkin patch, we anticipate that a **Fall Fair** has the potential to be a huge fundraiser for our church! All we need is **YOU** and your ideas to ensure its success! Please call Cindy Ryan at 508-832-3416 and let her know you'd like to help.

We are pleased to announce that church member Marilyn Plue was recently honored by the VNA Care Network & Hospice on Thursday, March 20th. As Marilyn retires from their Board of Directors, she was presented with the "Continuing the Tradition of Caring Award" for her 40 years of volunteer service within the organization. The award is given, "To honor an individual or group whose contributions support the fulfillment of VNA Care Network & Hospice's mission of providing the highest quality of care to enable patients to remain as safe and healthy as possible in the comfort of their home or at one of the hospice residences."

Pastor Brian, Pat Bukoski, and Linda and Phyllis Hardy were in attendance to share in Marilyn's well deserved time in the spotlight. We at FCC applaud you, Marilyn, for giving so generously of your time and talents!



SAVE THE DATE - SATURDAY JUNE 21st YARD & PLANT SALE - CHICKEN BBQ

Spring cleaning? Don't throw that good "stuff" away. Recycle it by selling it to someone who needs it! Do you have an accumulation of things that are just too good to throw away, but you no longer need? Don't have enough to hold your own yard sale? Join us on the church lawn for our **Community Yard Sale**. Spaces are \$15 for church members, \$20 for non-members. Use of a table is \$5 per table. Please contact Cindy Dube at 508-832-6646 or Denise in the church office at 508-832-2845 to secure your spot.

We need your help to make this event a success. You can carry out tables and chairs, help serve and clean tables during bbq hours, help clean-up and return tables inside at the end of the day, make a monetary donation to help defray costs, **SHOW YOUR SUPPORT** by donating perennials, renting a yard sale space, shopping at the yard sale, joining us for the chicken bbq and inviting lots of friends and family to join you!

LENTEN SERIES CONTINUES . . . We hope you'll join us on Wednesday, April 2 and/or April 9, when we will continue to meet over soup and sandwiches beginning at 6 p.m. and concluding at 7 p.m.

Our time will include a brief video on the parables of Jesus.
Remaining topics include "Debtors" and "New Wine."

April 2 Chicken soup and grilled cheese sandwiches supplied by the Board of Ed

April 9 Chili and Italian subs supplied by the Outreach Committee

From Here We Grow Preschool



I am writing this on the official first day of spring; unfortunately, it doesn't quite feel like spring yet. It will come; we just have to be patient. With the month of March coming to a close, we look forward to brighter, sunny days and the chance to be outside.

In March we were visited by Neal Primeaux Photography who spent two days with us taking pictures of the children and their classmates. Once again, thank you to the Board of Christian Ed. for allowing us the use of a Sunday school room for the individual pictures.

Here We Grow hosted its Open House on March 5th. We were visited by some new families and some past families. As of this writing we do have open spots in all 3-year-old and 4-year-old sessions. If you know of someone looking for a great preschool, please send them our way.

Our third fundraiser was run during the month of February. The families of *Here We Grow* sold or ate close to \$6,200 in Hebert candy bars which gave us a profit of about \$3,100.00. This money is used for the field trips taken during the school year.

Once again the 4-year-old classes will be visiting Life Care of Auburn. We visited last year and the children, staff, parent helpers, and residents of Life Care had a great time. We can't wait to go on March 28th. The children and residents will be doing sand art, planting seeds in decorated cups, decorating cookies and then eating their created snack in the dining room. AA Transportation is giving us a fantastic deal on a bus rental which will bring the children and staff back to *Here We Grow*. I will give a full report next month on this exciting adventure.

Our final fundraiser will be the sale of beautiful hanging plants. They will be here for Mother's Day. If you are interested in purchasing a plant, please stop in the office to place your order.

Looking ahead to April, we will be celebrating Easter on April 16th and 17th. We will be closed for Good Friday, April 18th and April 21-25 for spring vacation.

Here We Grow will be running a summer program the last two full weeks of June and the split week of June/July. The first two weeks will be full weeks with the third week being a 4 day week; ending on July 3rd. Our themes are: "Around the World in 5 Days," "Hiking through the Rainforest" and "Beach Bums." If you know of anyone who has children 4-9 and would like to send them to our summer program, have them give the school a call for more information.

Until next month, stay well and keep looking for those crocuses.

Dawn Murphy, *Here We Grow* Preschool Director

JOIN US!

We continue to hold scheduled potluck suppers (a combination of potluck and book/movie discussions) in the vestry/old kitchen. The next get together will be on **Tuesday April 22nd, at 5:30 p.m.**, when we will view the movie, *Osama*, about a girl in Afghanistan.

On **Tues., May 20th**, we will discuss the **Gospel of John beginning at 6 p.m.** Remember, **EVERYONE** is invited to join us for any or all parts of the evening.

Please call the church office, 508-832-2845, if you have any questions.

Our next **Community Supper** is planned for

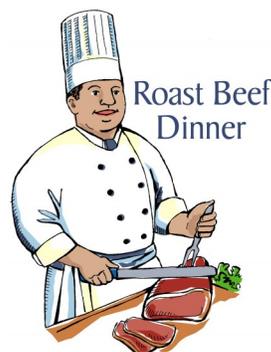
Saturday, April 12th
at 5:00 p.m.

On the menu:

Roast Beef Dinner

Adults \$10 Children \$5

Servers: Music & Prudential
additional volunteers needed



From the Pastor *(continued from page 1)*

I also think it is horrible how modern people think we are better than people from the past. The Venerable Bede was an important man; to call him wrong or a liar is the height of modern hubris. We should have more respect for the care and honesty of our elders. But that is a subject for another day.

The Easter bunny might come from the old totem animal for a pagan goddess; or it might come from the power the hare has to reproduce and never die. The hare can be seen as a symbol of Jesus. Jesus and the hare are both seen as pests by those larger and more powerful — the hare being the eternal pest of the farmer protecting his food from hare incursions and often losing; Jesus being killed by the rich and powerful, yet enduring, and the body of Christ still growing two millennia later.

Pastor Brian

First Congregational Church Fundraiser on Oct. 20th at the Publick House in Sturbridge

Save the Date

Save the date of Oct. 20th for the supper at the Publick House to benefit the Church. A turkey dinner with all the fixings will be served with two seatings (4:30-6:15 and 6:30-7:30). The total cost of the all-you-can-eat buffet is \$13 with \$4 out of every ticket going to our Church (and another \$4 going to another charity). It is a wonderful dinner with dessert, beverage, etc., and we are hoping that MANY people will participate.

We welcome Keagan Douglas Cone who made his appearance on March 4, 2014, weighing in at 7.1 lbs and 19.1 in. long. Proud family members include: Parents - Kevin and Stacie Cone, Grandparents - Gordon and Linda Mahlert and Great Grandparents - Edward and Jean Brothers. Congratulations to all!



We are pleased to announce the arrival of Andrew Marshall Sharr, born March 10th, and weighing 6.7 lbs and 19.5 inches long! Proud parents are Andrew and Kathleen Sharr, who share, "We feel blessed and thank all the church community for their support."

"We the People" State Championship Team

We are proud in announcing that our very own Lillian McPherson is one of 35 Auburn High School students who comprise the "We the People" team that took state championship earlier this year. This year's state finals were held at the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University.

As Massachusetts state champions, the group will be moving on to the national competition to be held April 25th at the George Mason University in Fairfax, VA where the top 10 teams will advance to compete for the national championship title at the U.S. House of Representatives on Capitol Hill.

The "We the People: the Citizen and the Constitution" national finals are sponsored by the Center for Civic Education and is a yearly competition of high school students from across the U.S. During the finals over 1,200 students will testify before a total of 72 judges in panels of 3. The judges are history, political science, law, and education professors, members of the legal community, and others with a knowledge of the Constitution and Bill of Rights.

The cost of participating in the national competition is \$47,000 for the team and 4 faculty chaperones. With no state or federal funding, the team has been busy garnering support. To date, they have raised \$26,000. If you would like to donate, please contact Auburn High School history teacher, Mr. Spencer Kennard, at 508-832-7711.

We congratulate Lillian and her team and wish them continued success!

FROM THE DIRECTOR OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

We made it through the long cold winter. I hope the snow is over.

Y.O.M. just finished selling butter braids and they will be delivered on Saturday April 5th @ 11:30 at church. If you are unable to pick them up, then they will be available for pick up after church on April 6th. Thank you to everyone who purchased these sweet treats.

We will have our **annual Easter Egg Hunt** on Palm Sunday after church. **PLEASE SIGN-UP** ahead of time. It is better to sign up if there is a possibility you will be coming then not to sign up and show up on that Sunday. We base the number of eggs we fill on the number of people who sign up.

I am still in need of teachers for May. This is the last month of Sunday school so if you have not had a chance to sign up or help out this is the time.

I wish you all a spring full of new beginnings and sweet surprises.

Jean McPherson
Director of Religious Education



Mark your calendars for:

THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE CENTRAL ASSOCIATION

Sun., May 4th at 4 p.m. - Gardner UCC

Look for more information to come.

The Auburn Woman's Club, in recognizing and celebrating its "**FIRST NINETY YEARS,**" would like to ask for your assistance by submitting the name of an Auburn woman along with a brief written description of how this individual has added to the quality of life in our community. What has her role been? Examples: mentoring, volunteering her special talent, her leadership abilities, or her innovativeness in a specialized area. Those chosen will be invited as our honored guests to attend this celebration to be held Sunday, May 4, 2014. Nomination letters will be accepted through April 18, 2014 and should be forwarded to: Ms. Barbara Carr, 22 Rock Avenue, Auburn, MA 01501.

Massachusetts Conference, United Church of Christ 215th ANNUAL MEETING ~ June 13 & 14, 2014

Sturbridge Host Hotel & Conference Center, 366 Main Street, Sturbridge, MA

The theme of this year's meeting, inspired by John 14:12; is "Greater Works than These."

The Keynote Speaker will be Yvette Flunder, Founder and Sr. Pastor of City of Refuge UCC in San Francisco. Flunder founded the City of Refuge UCC in 1991 in order to unite a gospel ministry with a social ministry. City of Refuge is a thriving inner-city. In June 2003, Bishop Flunder was consecrated Presiding Bishop of The Fellowship, a multi-denominational fellowship of 110 primarily African-American Christian leaders and laity representing 56 churches and faith-based organizations from all parts of the United States, Mexico and Africa.

Register for the meeting online at macucc.org.

Easter Plant Order Form

Once again we will be accepting orders for Easter plants. On Easter Sunday there will be a special insert in the bulletin noting who the plant is in honor of and who it's from. This is a wonderful way to pay tribute to a loved one while also decorating our Church Sanctuary. Just complete the order form below and drop it off at the Church or mail it to: FCC, 128 Central St., Auburn, MA 01501. Please submit your order form with payment **no later than Sunday, April 13th.**

Lilies (1 stem) \$10.00 _____

Lilies (2 stems) \$20.00 _____

Tulips 8" \$10.00 _____ **12" \$18** _____

Color Choice: Yellow _____ Pink _____
 Red _____ Orange _____

Double Tulips 8" \$10.00 _____ **12" \$18** _____

Color Choice: Red w/ Yellow edges _____
 Red w/ white edges _____

Blue Hyacinth \$10.00 _____

Dedication: (PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY)

PLEASE **PRINT** YOUR DEDICATION **EXACTLY** HOW YOU WOULD LIKE IT TO APPEAR IN THE BULLETIN INCLUDING WHO IT'S FROM.

In Memory of / In Celebration of/for: _____

Name: (contact person) _____

Phone: _____

If you have questions, please call Connie or Ron Hanks at 508-832-4227 or the church office at 508-832-2845.

TIDINGS is a monthly publication of

**First Congregational Church,
 United Church of Christ
 128 Central St., Auburn MA 01501**

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*God's church in Auburn Center
 doing Christ's work in the world.*

Web: auburnfirststucc.org



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OR CURRENT RESIDENT