

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 Pastor Brian

We start the girl months with April followed by May, June, and July/Julie/Julia. These months are about life and growth, warmth and new beginnings, a good description for young girls. These months also have strange weather. . . one day warm the next day cold, one day dry, the next pouring rain or falling snow. A time of capricious and random change — also a good description for women? Of course not. :-)

April is Latin and seems to come from the verb to open. Referring to the budding of the trees and the opening of flower blossoms. April was sacred to Aphrodite the goddess of love. "In the spring a young man's fancy turns to thoughts of love."

Like the April weather, Holy Week has its heart warming and freezing times. Jesus enters Jerusalem to great fanfare. He travels several days through the busy city, teaching and clearing the temple courtyard of the money changers. Jesus shares the most sacred meal with his disciples. It is a warm, friendly meal. They then go into the Garden where Jesus prays with great passion, while the disciples sleep. Jesus is willing to do his part, but still prays God would take that fate from him.

The disciples still sleep, until Judas comes with armed men to arrest Jesus. After a show of force the disciples scatter to hide and save themselves. Before the cock crows, Peter will deny Jesus three times. Jesus moves back and forth between the courts of the Sanhedrin, Herod, and Pontius Pilate. The trial and conviction show Jesus is not willing to lie even to save his life. After the trials we have torture when Jesus goes to Calvary where the torture intensifies and Jesus dies.

Jesus is laid in a borrowed tomb and as the stone is rolled in front of the tomb darkness descends. We stay in the darkness of the tomb Friday night, all day Saturday, until sunrise Sunday morning, Easter. With the rise of the sun/Son the stone of the tomb is rolled away, the power of the cross and death in general is broken. In the famous words of Charles Wesley:

Love's redeeming work is done, Alleluia! Fought the fight, the battle won, Alleluia!... Lives again our glorious King, Alleluia! Where, O death, is now thy sting? Alleluia! Once He died our souls to save, Alleluia! Where thy victory, O grave? Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

Blessed be the Lord!

Maundy Thursday Service will be held April 2nd at 7 p.m.

Good Friday is April 3rd ~ Auburn's Ecumenical Service will be held at Faith Baptist Church, 22 Faith Avenue in Auburn at 12:15 p.m. Our sanctuary will be open for one's own personal reflection from noon to 3 p.m.

Easter Sunday is April 5th ~ with our Sunrise Service at 6:30 a.m. at Hillside Cemetery and two worship services - 9:00 a.m. and 10:30 a.m. at the church.



~ All Are Welcome ~

Herald of Good TIDINGS

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.**

Mark your calendars for: THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE

CENTRAL ASSOCIATION

Sunday, May 3rd at 4 p.m. Look for more information to come.

CONGRATS!

Shannon Vayo has earned a B.S. in Public Health from Worcester State University (completing the coursework in just 3 ¹/₂ years). Congratulations, Shannon!

SUNDAY SCHOOL VOLUNTEERS

- 4/5 Pam Lazerick, Theresa Stone & Laurie Babcock
- 4/12 Theresa Stone, Ellie Lowell & Laurie Babcock
- 4/19 Elizabeth Allain & Laurie Babcock
- 4/26 Jim Censabella & Laurie Babcock

May volunteers needed, please sign-up on Sunday school bulletin board in Fellowship Hall.

Happy Birthday to: Ernie Smith - April 9th Haydn McPherson - April 10th Bob MacLeod - April 27th

SERMON TOPICS FOR APRIL

- 4/5 Easter 6:30a.m. Sunrise: "They Said Nothing"9:00 & 10:30a.m. at Church: "Easter Is in the Details"
- 4/12 Communion Sunday "Touch, Feel"
- 4/19 "Does the World Know God?"
- 4/26 "Good Shepherd"

Coffee Hour Hosts

4/5	~	Easter - no coffee hour	F
4/12	~	Music Committee	9
4/19 & 26	~	Memorial/Scholarship, Library, Nominating & Historian	2
5/3	~	Board of Trustees	

The Fall Fair Extravaganza is planned

for **Oct. 10th & 11th.** We are excited and anticipate another successful fair! (Last year we raised over \$6,000!) and once again we're reaching out to the congregation for your ideas! As you may recall, last year we had various themes or themed tables such as crafts, jellies/jams (food items), Christmas/Halloween sections, etc. To ensure its success, the planning must begin NOW!

This is a great opportunity to get to know the rest of your church family! Please contact Cindy Ryan at 508-832-3416 and let her know you're interested in being a part of this church fundraiser.

Our next **Community Supper** is planned for

Saturday, April 18th at 5:00 p.m.

On the menu: Roast Beef Dinner

Adults \$10 Children FREE

Servers: Music & Nominating Committees
additional volunteers needed

Worcester Sharks Faith & Family Night

7 p.m. April 11, 2015

Look for additional info on the back of this month's calendar insert.



SAVE THE DATE - SATURDAY JUNE 13th COMMUNITY YARD SALE

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 refreshment tables, 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, and joining us for a cookout and strawberry shortcake. Remember to invite lots of friends and family to join you!

FISHER HOUSE VISIT

On February 22nd a group of us (Pastor Brian, Jennifer Bohn, Marion Woodcock and Ellie Lowell) ventured to Fisher House in West Roxbury. According to <u>www.fisherhouse.org</u>: "Fisher Houses provide military families housing close to a loved one during hospitalization for an illness, disease or injury. There are 64 Fisher Houses located on 23 military installations and 24 VA medical centers."

The Fisher House building is beautiful -- as it should be, since each one costs \$6 million to build. Each Fisher House is identical in structure, so families following their loved ones to different hospitals can immediately feel at home. We got to see the common area, dining area, kitchen, and garden. We saw some inspiring art pieces and heard the stories behind them.

The Executive Director, Jennifer DeLuca, was very warm and enthusiastic. You can tell she really believes in their mission.

Marion presented 20 quilts -- 10 for children, done by the Linus project, and 10 for the soldiers. These latter 10 had a beautiful patriotic theme and each incorporated a piece of an actual flag and a place for the soldier to write his/her name on the quilt. These soldiers' quilts represented 300 hours of Marion's time!

And Jennifer presented our check for \$500. Jen D. really seemed to appreciate the quilts and our gift.

We even stopped for lunch at one of the Mass. Pike rest stops. So, a good time was had by all.



Cynthia H. (Hardy) Brothers, 85, a resident of The Overlook in Charlton and former long-time Auburn resident died peacefully Thursday, February 19, 2015 at UMASS University Hospital in Worcester. Her husband of 61 years, Earle L. Brothers, died in 2013. She leaves three sons, David Brothers and his wife, Andrea, and their sons, Timothy and Daniel; Peter Brothers and his wife, Lynn, and their daughter, Mary; Joel Brothers and his Wife, Dianna, and their daughter, Megan, and son, Michael; a great grandson, Dakota; a sister, Virginia Fisher. She is also survived by one nephew and two nieces. She was predeceased by her son, Timothy Scott Brothers. Cynthia was born in Worcester, daughter of the late William and Angie F. (Allen) Hardy. She graduated from North High School and

Salter Secretarial School. She worked in the Assessor's Office for the Town of Auburn and as a Collections Specialist in the medical field for many years until her retirement.

Cynthia was a long-time member of our Church and an experienced quilter with Project Linus. A memorial service was held on March 2, 2015 at the James C. Niccoll Chapel of The Overlook Healthcare Center in Charlton. Burial will be private in the family lot at Hillside Cemetery in Auburn at a later date.

Jesus told her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die like everyone else, will live again. They are given eternal life for believing in me and will never perish." John 11:25-26



52 High Street, Worcester, MA 01609 • 508.756.5486 • Fax: 508.798.3299 • WWW.ABBYSHOUSE.ORG

February 18, 2015

First Congregational Church of Auburn 128 Central Street Auburn, MA 01501

Dear Friends of Abby's House,

On behalf of Abby's House, we would like to thank you for your generous gift of \$496.45, received on January 24, 2015. It takes all of us working together to support women, with or without children, who are homeless, battered, and low-income. Through our partnership, we make the critical and relevant work of Abby's House possible.

With your help, we provide safe and affordable housing, maintain an emergency shelter and offer advocacy to an ever-increasing number of women and children in need. At Abby's, we listen with respect and without judgment, and encourage and empower each resident and guest to lead self-directed lives filled with dignity and hope for the future.

Your commitment to critical issues of homelessness and abuse is genuinely appreciated. You are truly making a difference and are an important part in helping each of our guests and residents find her way to a better life.

This letter is an official acknowledgement of your gift and certifies that no goods or services were received in consideration of this contribution; therefore, the full amount of your gift is tax deductible. Abby's House is registered as a 501(c)(3).

With warmest regards,

Curter Annette Rafferty

Annette Raffer Founder

>tephanie Page Stephanie Page

Executive Director

Thank you for supporting the Thank you for helping women and children women and children find a place they can call home! at Abby's theorse !

SHELTER • HOUSING • ADVOCACY

From Here We Grow Preschool



Here we are welcoming in spring with snow still on the ground. Soon it will be just a distant memory, once we are able to see and enjoy the great outdoors. Welcome to New England.

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 10th. We were visited by many new families and some past families. We scheduled the Open House in the morning and had a much better turnout than years past when we hosted it in the afternoon. As of this writing we do have just a few open spots in our morning 3-year-old sessions and our afternoon 4-year-old sessions. If you know of someone looking for a great preschool, please send them our way. We also will be hiring 2 part time teachers for next year to work with 3's and 4's; if you know of anyone, have them give me a call.

At this writing we are trying to decide if we will do our final fundraiser, the sale of beautiful hanging plants. We will send out more information, if and when we do this fundraiser.

Looking ahead to April, we will be celebrating Easter on April 1st and 2nd. We will be closed for Good Friday, April 3rd, and April 20-24 for spring vacation. We are looking into setting up a date to have members of the Amber Alert Team, Massachusetts State Police, and Auburn Police at HWG to do fingerprinting of our graduating 4's.

Here We Grow will be running a summer program June $15-19^{th}$ —It's a Jungle Out There, June $22-26^{th}$ — Once Upon a Time, and June 29-July 3^{rd} — A Pirate's Life for Me. If you know of anyone who has children 4-9 who would like to send them to our summer program, have them give the school a call for more information (508-832-8184).

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

Dawn Murphy *Here We Grow* Preschool Director

JOIN US!

We continue to hold potluck suppers (a combination of potluck and book/movie discussions) in the downstairs kitchen. The next get together will be on **Tuesday**, April **28th at 5:30 p.m.** when we will view the movie, *Apartment for Peggy*. Peggy and her husband, Jason, have little money and are in need of housing. They are referred to philosophy professor Henry Barnes, who is contemplating suicide. However, Peggy and Jason help him realize he still has a purpose in life.

On **Tuesday, May 19th beginning at 6 p.m.**, we will discuss the book, *Kisses from Katie – A Story of Relentless Love & Redemption* by Katie Davis. "When an 18-year-old from Nashville visits Uganda on a mission trip, she is so affected that she moves back for one year to teach in an orphanage. Faced with a choice between the United States, her parents' wishes for her college education, her boyfriend, and staying in Uganda, Katie must decide: will she give up her life and buy a one-way ticket to Uganda? As the subtitle suggests, this is a story of an amazing young woman with no limits to love." *Publishers Weekly*





April is Alcohol Awareness Month, National Autism Awareness Month, National Child Abuse Prevention Month, National Distracted Driving Awareness Month, and National Donate Life Month. It is also National Facial Protection Month, Occupational Health Month, and Sports Eye Safety Month.

April 6-12 is National Public Health Week

April 7 is World Health Day

April 9 is National Alcohol Screening Day

April 18-25 is National Infant Immunization Week

April 20-24 is Every Kid Healthy Week

April 24-30 World Immunization Week

April 24 is World Meningitis Day

April 27-May 1 is Air Quality Awareness Week

Last month, I started a group for widows and widowers. It was a time to share thoughts, concerns, ideas. We are going to meet the first Thursday of the month at 10:00 in the green room, around the corner from Fellowship Hall. Because of Easter, our next meeting is April 9. Anyone is welcome.

Also, the closet just inside the door to the educational wing has medical equipment to be borrowed. It is for anyone that needs it. If it is there, help yourself. If there is something you need, and it isn't there, please check with me. I know where some items are that aren't stored in the closet.

> Happy Spring! Happy Easter! Debbie Pranaitis, Parish Nurse

From the Merriam-Webster Dictionary:

stewardship noun/stew-ard-ship, stu-erd-ship

:the activity or job of protecting and being responsible for something

- I : the office, duties, and obligations of a steward
- 2 : the conducting, supervising, or managing of something; especially: the careful and responsible management of something entrusted to one's care

What does this mean to us at the First Congregational Church? Who are the stewards and what are the offices, duties and obligations of these said stewards? We the members of God's church are the stewards. Just as God put Adam in the Garden to work it and to take care of it we have been called as God's stewards to manage that which belongs to Him. We are expected to serve Him thru committees and boards, stepping up to help with special events and financial support, our time, talents and treasures.

We have all been entrusted by God to care for His church. We, your Stewardship Committee, are responsible for overseeing the income of the church through pledges and donations made by the members of this church. Individually we must keep in mind the promises we have made to God and try our best to be good stewards and fulfil these promises. Typically the "Stewardship Campaign" runs in the fall but we must remember that being a good steward is a year round responsibility.

We are so truly blessed to be part of God's plan, please keep God and your church in your plan.

Your Stewardship Committee, Marge Averka, Randy Bohn, Cindy Dube, Linda Hardy, Marilyn Kulesa, and Shelia Skog

Although it seems a long way off, we have begun to plan for our 2015 campaign, "Count yourself blessed."

FROM THE DIRECTOR OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

HAPPY EASTER! I pray that you are all reading this while looking out your window at the beautiful SPRING flowers.

This has been a very busy couple of weekends for YOM and the confirmands. On March 13-15 Alex and I took 8 of our teens to Monadnock Bible Conference where we heard the message "Adopted by Jesus." Through word and song we were told about confessing our sins and asking Jesus to enter into our hearts. We had 4 of our youth stand up and accept Jesus into their hearts for the first time or to renew their desire to be adopted by Jesus. At the end of the weekend I asked each participant to write me a little paragraph about their experience. I have included some for you to read:

"I really like the message the speaker preached about. That if we truly believe in Jesus that we will be able to be adopted as God's son or daughter."

"Jesus is God's only son but we can be adopted by confessing our sins and not only believing in your mind but also in your hearts."

"I liked extreme tubing!"

We even had two enter the talent show! The whole weekend was a great opportunity to share God's word as well as have a good time with each other. We want to thank all of you who helped us have this experience.

The next weekend the confirmation class, Pastor Brian, and I participated in CityReach. This program is run by Ecclesia Ministries in Boston. On Friday night we met with our guide for the night. Our guide was a formerly homeless man, who had been homeless for 27 years! He is currently housed and has joined CityReach to help give back. We took a walk around the common at night to see how tough it was for those who were living on the streets. It was cold and snowing, but for us, we were dressed warm and back in the church within the hour. When we woke in the morning after sleeping on the church floor we were treated to breakfast and invited our guests in to have coffee and choose some clothing and get a sandwich. During this time the teens were invited to sit and talk with the guests. You should be very proud of how well the kids did. They each stepped out of their comfort zone and met with at least 8 guests. For some it was just a simple, "Hello, how are you?" While other conversations involved sitting for awhile and really listening and learning about the guest.

As we were leaving, we were given a challenge to see how we could go back to our home congregation and continue helping the homeless population. The kids decided that they wanted to collect toiletries including sunscreen and collect donations at a movie night for the kids that we would then send back to CityReach in time for their next "Open House" on May 2-3. We will put a box in Fellowship Hall to collect the toiletries. We want to thank you all for your help.

- The sunrise service will be officiated by the confirmation class at Hillside Cemetery at 6:30 a.m. Please join us as we celebrate Easter.
- As you can see, the teens are very active in learning about and living God's word. Please continue to pray for them as they continue their journey.

Look back and thank God. Look forward and trust God.

Jean McPherson Director of Religious Education

CONFIRMANDS' CITYREACH PRAYER



Thank you for exposing us to these connections to our homeless brothers and sisters. Through your service we can help serve others with compassion and love. Thank you for the resilience that allows us to retain laughter that might inspire hope. We discovered that empathy, not material possessions, are the blessing. We are grateful for the acceptance we felt and are reminded to give it back by remembering the names and carrying on the spirit of those we met.

Amen.

Massachusetts Conference, United Church of Christ

216th ANNUAL MEETING ~ June 12 & 13, 2015

University of Massachusetts (Hotel UMass), 1 Campus Center Way, Amherst, MA

The Annual Meeting is one of those rare opportunities to gather together with brothers and sisters of faith from places beyond our local church setting. We experience something of the breadth and depth of the Body of Christ – and know that we are part of something Big! Come to re-connect with friends, for the conversations, the worship, fellowship, and the business of the Conference. Come to learn and to be inspired by dynamic preaching. Come to celebrate, worship, and be joyful together! Go to: www.MACUCC.org to register.

We are excited about our new venue at the University of Massachusetts (UMASS) Amherst with its great facilities, food, and opportunities to be outside from time to time. We hope you will join us!

Theme: But we have this treasure in clay jars, so that it may be made clear that this extraordinary power belongs to God and does not come from us. – 2 Corinthians 4:7. Our Annual Meeting will be an opportunity to focus on the "treasure" – the glory of God, carried and made visible in particular ways in each person present, and in our work together as the Body of Christ.

Keynote Speaker and Preacher - The Rev. Nadia Bolz-Weber is founding pastor of House for All Sinners and Saints, a Lutheran mission church in Denver, Colorado. Learn more about Nadia at www.nadiabolzweber.com. Her keynote address will be open to the public, so invite your friends to join you for this part of the meeting!

TIDINGS is a monthly publication of

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

Phone: (508) 832-2845 Office Hours: Mon.-Fri. 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Email: secretary@auburnfirstucc.org or PastorBrian@auburnfirstucc.org

God's church in Auburn Center doing Christ's work in the world. Web:auburnfirstucc.org

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