

Herald of Good TIDINGS

APRIL

2022

“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

“Very truly, I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born again.”⁴ Nicodemus said to him, “How can anyone be born after having grown old? Can one enter a second time into the mother’s womb and be born?”⁵ Jesus answered, “Very truly, I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit.⁶ What is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit.” [John 3:3b-6].

Time for new.

It might still snow, but not for long, and it won't stay. The sun is now warmer. The light and heat of the sun hits us at a higher angle. The light lasts longer; we now have more day than night.

Three months ago things were very different. The cold was here to stay. The Omicron variant had everyone staying isolated, wearing masks, and feeling the pain of the cold and dark.

Now Covid numbers might go up for a little while, but people will be outside more and the virus will have less chance to spread. Now plants are blooming, bird songs fill the air, and hope, likewise, has sprung up.

New life is a new chance.

Jesus calls us to be born again. Some of our brethren even call themselves born again. But they only do it once. I think I need to be born again often. It is so easy to lose track of what is important. It is too easy to make new mistakes.

We need God to set us right. Unfortunately, I need to be set right often. It is good (but impossible) to be sinless. It is bad to let one mistake make you feel like a failure, and give up. Rather, let a mistake be a prod to do better and redouble our efforts. Let us see our error and be energized to make changes for the better.

Maybe this will be the spring I will get my hands in the dirt and do more gardening. Maybe I will walk more for a while. Maybe you will commit to more naps. Whatever it is, I hope you make changes for the better.

Spring has sprung. May we all have a little more spring in our step.

Pastor Brian



Palm Sunday Service at 10 a.m. on April 10th.

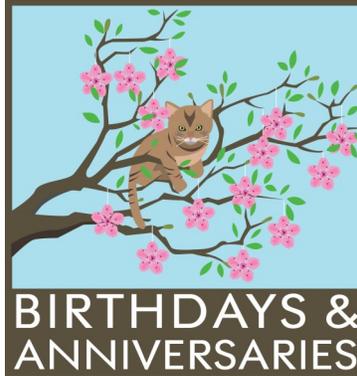
Maunder Thursday Service will be held April 14th at 7 p.m.

Good Friday is April 15th ~ The church sanctuary will be open from noon until 3 p.m. for one’s own personal time of prayer and reflection. Note: there will be no community Good Friday service this year.

Easter Sunday is April 17th ~ with our Sunrise Service at 6 a.m. at Hillside Cemetery and ONE church worship service at 10 a.m.

ALL ARE WELCOME

APRIL



Happy Birthday to:

Ernie Smith - April 9th

Haydn McPherson - April 10th

Happy Anniversary to:

Tricia & Reno Gervasi who will celebrate their special day on April 26th.

APRIL SERMONS

4/3 "A New 'Thing'"

4/10 Passion Sunday - "Pilate: 'He Is Innocent!' I'll Just Beat Him Up and Set Him Free"

4/17 **EASTER SUNDAY:**

6 a.m. SUNRISE SERVICE AT HILLSIDE CEMETERY: "The Light"

10 a.m. CHURCH SERVICE: "Angels in the Graveyard"

4/24 Pastor Brian will be on vacation beginning April 18th and back in the office on April 26th. Please pray for a time of rest and renewal.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS FOR THESE PALM SUNDAY EVENTS:

ON PALM SUNDAY, APRIL 10, we'll begin the day with the return of our annual **BREAKFAST** (YAY!) beginning at 8:30 a.m. There is no cost for the breakfast but a free-will offering will be accepted. The Outreach Committee has arranged for a guest speaker, Molly, from Habitat for Humanity.



Kids, join us for our annual **EASTER EGG HUNT** which will be held after worship on Palm Sunday!

Please see the sign-up sheets for both of these events located on the table in fellowship hall or call the church office, 508-832-2845, to have your name added to the list(s).



April is Alcohol Awareness Month, Irritable Bowel Syndrome Awareness Month, and National Child Abuse Prevention Month. It is also National Donate Life Month and Parkinson's Awareness Month.

April 1-7 is National Public Health Week

April 11-16 is Oral, Head, and Neck Cancer Awareness Week

April 22-28 is World Immunization Week

April 2 is World Autism Awareness Day

April 7 is World Health Day

April 15 is National Prescription Drug Take Back Day

If anyone has medications that you're not taking anymore and/or expired medications, you can take them to any police station lobby. There's a large container that you can deposit them in, except for liquids. If you are unable to do that, let me know and I will do it for you. Please do not leave any meds in the medical supply closet at church.

I will be attending my annual Parish Nurse Seminar virtually again this June. I'm hoping to be able to attend in-person next year, but for now, it's still virtual.

Happy, healthy spring to everyone.

God Bless,

Deb Pranaitis, Parish Nurse

cell: 508-612-4521

CALLING ALL LADIES — JOIN US!



Coffee Fellowship

SATURDAY, APRIL 23, 10AM – NOON IN FELLOWSHIP HALL

Bring your most awesome cup/mug for conversation and coffee.

Ladies, bring your neighbors and friends for a time of:

FAITH ~ FELLOWSHIP ~ COFFEE ~ CONVERSATION



“And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another . . .” Hebrews 10:24-25

Please contact Nan Johnson with any questions.

A Message from the Board of Deacons:

The Deacons would like to remind you about the Pearl B. Morrill Trust Fund. This trust was set up by Pearl Morrill for the benefit of the elderly members of the First Congregational Church of Auburn. The Trust has helped several members of the Church with meeting a variety of financial needs. Some things you should know about the Trust:

The Trust is open to elderly members of the Church. We have agreed that “elderly” is defined as age 55 and older.

The administrators of the Trust are the Board of Deacons and the Pastor.

The Pastor may have sole discretion of requests for funds up to \$500. The Pastor and Board of Deacons vote on requests over the \$500 amount.

Requests can be initiated by any Church member (do not need to be 55 or older) but must be for the benefit of elderly members of the Church. Requests can be for any number of needs such as financial hardships, medical bills, projects that benefit the elderly, etc.

The Prudential Committee is responsible for investing funds regarding the Trust. Some of these investments are non-taxable (municipal bonds) and some are taxable.

The Pastor and Board of Deacons are responsible for filing taxes and court documentation. To this end we have secured the services of an accountant to help us in filing taxes.

Administrative fees (Accounting / Court / Legal) and taxes are paid for out of the Pearl Morrill Trust itself with no impact to the Church’s general budget.

If you have any questions regarding the operation of the trust itself, please feel free to contact Pastor Brian, one of the Deacons, or one of the Prudential Committee members.

Pastor Brian and the Deacons continue to welcome requests and ideas for usage of this generous trust and would love to see it put to good use.

The Board of Deacons

Please note: request forms are available by contacting the church office, 508-832-2845, or email secretary@auburnfirstucc.org. Completed forms should be returned to the attention of the Board of Deacons.

CWS (Church World Service) Emergency Response Fund: Russian Invasion of Ukraine

Russia’s military aggression in Ukraine has triggered a massive humanitarian upheaval. Ukrainians have crossed into other countries in search of safety. “At this rate, the situation looks set to become Europe’s largest refugee crisis this century,” the UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees) said. Ukraine has already been a leading country of origin for refugees arriving in the United States due to Russia’s annexation of Crimea in 2014, with more than 10,000 Ukrainian refugees resettling in American communities the last five years.

CWS will respond to meet the needs emerging from this crisis. Our staff and partners in Europe are carefully monitoring the unfolding emergency. We are in deep conversation with our teams who work with migrants and refugees in Balkan nations, our local partners in the region, and international coalitions to assess emerging needs and create response plans accordingly.

In the United States, CWS is one of nine resettlement agencies that implements the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program. We stand ready to welcome Ukrainian refugees who will arrive in American communities in the coming months and years. Our teams have proudly welcomed Ukrainians for more than a decade as part of our work addressing the global refugee crisis. We continue to fight for a robust system through which people who have been displaced from Ukraine, Afghanistan, Myanmar (Burma), Tigray, Syria and many more countries of origin can access pathways to rebuild their lives in peace.

We are establishing the Ukraine Crisis Response Fund to offer humanitarian assistance to people displaced as a result of the violence and bolster partners in Europe to serve the most vulnerable.

You may donate to CWS by making **a check out to the church and noting Ukrainian Relief in the memo**. Donations may be placed in the Sunday offering or mailed to the church: 128 Central St., Auburn, MA 01501.



RAISE SOME DOUGH!

Here We Grow Preschool

will earn **20%** of all qualifying sales from orders placed on **April 12th**.

When: **Tuesday, April 12, 2022**

Time: **4:00 P.M. – 9:00 P.M.**

Where: **459 Southbridge Street, Auburn**

Phone: **508-832-6583**

- When you place your order, tell us you support this fundraiser! Hand us this flyer or show it on a mobile device for your organization to get credit for your order.
- Online orders: Enter code **19** at the payment screen and then click apply.
- **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.**
- Flyers cannot be handed out in or around the Papa Gino's restaurant on the day of your event.
- Flyers made by the organization will not be accepted for the fundraiser event.
RESTAURANT ONLY - Ring in this sale using the POS button 19: Fundraiser.

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

View menu and place online orders at: www.papaginos.com

From Here We Grow Preschool



The weather is warming up and we are so happy to be getting back outside with the children. We are so fortunate to have access to the vestry all winter long. Not many schools in our area have an indoor playground like we do, but we are ready to go outside. Like most schools in the state, we have lifted our mask requirement and made it parent's choice as of March 14. It is so nice to see everyone's smiling faces; it's been too long!

We are pleased to welcome Abigail Leahy to the Here We Grow staff as an aide for the remainder of the school year. She has been a great help to the staff already. We also want to welcome Mrs. Katelyn Aguiar as a teacher on Tuesday and Thursday mornings for the remainder of the school year. Mrs. Aguiar is replacing Mrs. Lempicki who has chosen to leave Here We Grow.

This month, we are looking forward to Neil Primeaux coming in once again to do our school pictures; he has been doing photos for the school almost since we opened. Here We Grow will be closed on Friday, April 15, for Good Friday. We will also be closed the week of April 18-22 for vacation.

We still have availability in all of our classes for the 2022-23 school year if you know anyone looking, please send them our way. Children can start school at 2 years, 9 months, and do not need to be potty trained or live in Auburn. We are still offering tours for families after 3:00 during the week and on weekends.

We will be hosting a Papa Gino's night on Tuesday, April 12, from 4-9 PM. You can choose dine-in, delivery or take out. To ensure proper crediting to our account, you must mention the flyer when calling in an order and/or present the flyer when ordering in-person. A flyer is included on page 5 of this newsletter.

Thank you to everyone who purchased tickets for the calendar giveaway. We will begin drawing winners on April 1st- Good luck to all!

Cristi Corey, Director, *Here We Grow* Preschool

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, and one scholarship gives preference to those who are musically inclined and, we also have several unrestricted scholarships.

Please contact Denise in the church office at 508-832-2845 or email secretary@auburnfirstucc.org to request an application. **APPLICATIONS ARE DUE BY APRIL 15TH.**

*Baptized
in the name
of the Lord*



On Sunday, March 20th, we celebrated the baptism of 5-month-old Michael Lawrence Denham, the son of Amanda and Matthew Denham. Michael's proud great-grandma is Cheryl Cariglio.

Please join us in praying for God's continued blessing upon Michael and his family.

FROM THE DIRECTOR OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

I absolutely love the month of April. Although, this April, I will have a teenager in my house! Hendrix turns 13 on March 28. I need all the prayers!! As I will certainly be praying for the moms and dads and grandparents who are also in the thick of raising young teenagers! May the Lord bless us all with patience, restraint, tolerance, and composure!

March was a fairly quiet month for our Sunday School program. It is wonderful to see the faces of our beautiful children as the state has loosened our mask protocols. Some families and some children continue to choose to wear a mask. That is great because those families are exercising their right to do so! What an important learning opportunity for our children!

As we approach Easter and celebrate the gift of Jesus, we have been praying more. We have been acknowledging our own mistakes and seeking forgiveness. We have been choosing kindness! We have been making personal sacrifices through giving up something important. I call on all our children to continue to pray, repent and be kind! Let's make it a habit. That brings me back to mask wearing. Some children wear them, some children do not. It is important to remind our children that either way is ok. Families will make choices that are best for them. Yours does! Mine does! Let's celebrate the blessing of living in a country where freedom of choice matters! Because the truth is: It is the Lord our God that gave us our freedom of choice. And even when someone makes a different choice than you do, we should continue to show kindness to them!

There are a lot of things to look forward to in April. Including Palm Sunday celebrations with breakfast, a parade of youth and their palms, and our much anticipated egg hunt (make sure to sign up for both so we know how many families to prepare for). And Easter!!!! I will be attending my first ever sunrise Easter service. Our confirmation class will be singing my favorite Easter songs! I can't wait!

Our children were given the opportunity to color and decorate an invitation for a friend or family member to attend Palm Sunday or Easter with our church.

Easter is my favorite Christian holiday! I love the music of this season, filled with sounds of celebration and joy and hope for the future! It is a time of forgiveness. Forgive yourself! Try to forgive others!

Luke 6:37 —

“Do not judge, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven.”

A very special thank you to our volunteers, Ron Klauke and Jennifer Bohn. I also want to acknowledge all the amazing women on the BOCE. Your love and support is immeasurable! They are downstairs with me and the kids or making things happen in the background. They are the engine that keeps our program moving!

Love and Peace,

Shannon Hartmann, cell: 339-222-1841

*Worship With Us
This Easter*



Please be in prayer for the Fant Family due to the recent passing of Bruce's brother, Steve.

**COMMUNITY YARD SALE—PLANT SALE!!!
SATURDAY, JUNE 11TH ~ 8 A.M. TO 1 P.M. ~ RAIN OR SHINE**



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? Store those items and plan to join us on the Church lawn for **OUR COMMUNITY YARD SALE on June 11th!** As we've done in the past, we will rent spaces and tables, plus we'll do all the advertising and, remember, our prime location can't be beat! We will also have a church table and will be accepting donations. Please **NO** computer equipment, TV's, clothing, or VCR tapes. Thank you.

Also, when separating perennials in your gardens, please keep the plant sale in mind and pot up a few to donate. The plants are a huge part of the church's profits.

Please mark your calendars and plan to support this church fundraiser by renting a space or volunteering to help at the yard sale - plant sale. By the way, last year we had such a tremendous response to our yard sale that we had to implement a wait list. So, don't delay in reserving your spot.

SPACES ARE \$20 FOR CHURCH MEMBERS & \$25 FOR NON-MEMBERS.

TABLES ARE AVAILABLE TO RENT FOR \$5 EACH.

Call the church office, 508-832-2845, to reserve your spot!

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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April 2022						
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OR CURRENT RESIDENT