



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

April, Hope or Fear?

April showers bring May flowers.

I have just seen a couple of news stories saying our trees are all in grave danger due to the lack of snow. Then we had 3 storms in a couple weeks, a lot of rain and some snow. I imagine our trees are no longer in grave danger. We no longer need to fear for our trees due to a dry winter, I hope.

I suspect news stations get polling and ratings information telling them what stories get the most eye-balls for the longest time. I would love to see that data.

Is the Ukraine war less popular after a year? Are news ratings still going down? Will talk of bank failures and recession make more money for the news networks? Is fear mongering no longer getting the attention it once did?

I hope that April brings showers, and sunshine. Warm days and days to bundle up. Days to laugh and days to weep. I hope the happy days will outnumber the sad ones.

In a couple of months we will be complaining about the heat and asking for sweater weather to return.

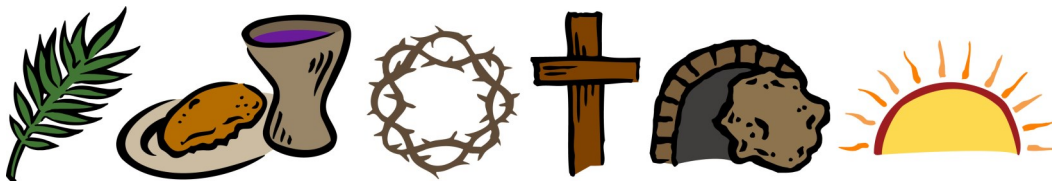
Our ultimate hope is in Easter, the empty tomb, the life eternal. We put crosses in our churches but the cross was defeated, along with death and the ultimate fear. Our hope is in Jesus and his love for us and our love of Him.

We will have a parade with laughter and song. We will have a holy meal. Strangers will come to take Jesus to torture and death. But what the forces of fear thought was the end, was just the beginning. Hope, like Jesus, lives.

Let life bloom this month and forever more. Let light grow and darkness decrease. The LORD is a mighty God and we are His people.

God bless,

Pastor Brian



HOLY WEEK CALENDAR

Palm Sunday Service at 10 a.m. on April 2nd.

Maundy Thursday Service will be held April 6th at 7 p.m.

Good Friday is April 7th ~ The church sanctuary will be open from noon until 3 p.m. for one's own personal time of prayer and reflection.

Easter Sunday is April 9th ~ with our Sunrise Service at 6 a.m. at Hillside Cemetery and ONE church worship service at 10 a.m.

ALL ARE WELCOME

MARK YOUR CALENDARS FOR THESE PALM SUNDAY EVENTS:

ON PALM SUNDAY, APRIL 2ND, we'll begin the day with our annual **BREAKFAST** beginning at 8 a.m. There is no cost for the breakfast but a free-will offering will be accepted. The Outreach Committee has arranged for guest speakers from LIFT — Living In Freedom Together, a women's shelter, to join us and share with us news about the important work they do.



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).

BELL CHOIR SCHEDULE

- 4/2 2 p.m. rehearsal on Palm Sunday
 4/9 9 a.m. rehearsal on Easter Sunday
 4/16, 4/23 & 4/30 rehearsals will be held at 2 p.m.

Coffee Hour Hosts

- 4/2 ~ Pastor Brian & Bev Geddes
 4/9 ~ **Easter — no coffee hour**
 4/16 ~ Financial Secretaries/Treasurers
 4/23 ~ Outreach Committee
 4/30 ~ **VOLUNTEERS NEEDED**

Would you like to help at an upcoming coffee hour? Please sign-up in fellowship hall.

APRIL Birthdays & Anniversaries

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.

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.**

FROM THE DIRECTOR OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Encounter can be a verb or a noun. According to Google, the definition means to unexpectedly experience or face something difficult, or an unexpected meeting with someone or something. In March, our Youth On a Mission (YOM) attended Monadnock's *Encounter* weekend. We had 8 children attend, and 3 adults. This year's trip was magnificent. We were lucky enough to be in attendance during a snowstorm. The beauty of the snow fall was inspiring and the children's joy was priceless. Some went tubing and some swam in the indoor pool. We played dodge ball and mini golf, ping pong and billiards, and drank ice cream frappes while the snow fell. We all had so much fun. Chapel and worship were also a big part of this weekend. There were 4 chapel sessions, each followed by a group discussion. During chapel, we listened to sermons, prayed and sang along with a great Christian rock band. I believe the children, and even the adults, encountered something very special.

One of the great Bible stories that we discussed was David and the giant (Goliath). Although this is a common story that is taught in Sunday School, our perspective was different in the setting of Monadnock. Reading the story from the Bible, as opposed to reading it from a curriculum, was insightful. It provoked many questions from our youth and gave the adults something to ponder as we find our way through today's world.

You see, Saul was the king of Israel at the time. He was beloved by his people. Saul was impressive; he was a tall, handsome warrior and the people of Israel had faith he would protect them. But when the Philistines presented their greatest warrior, the giant Goliath, Saul and his army hid in their tents. They were too scared to go into battle, so they waited... until David showed up. David was a smaller, young man who spent his time tending sheep. He was known for his singing about the power of the Lord. It was little David whose faith in God gave him the confidence to face the giant. I Samuel 17:37: "The LORD who rescued me from the paw of the lion and the paw of the bear will rescue me from the hand of this Philistine." David not only faced the giant but defeated him! I Samuel 17:49 "Reaching into his bag and taking out a stone, he slung it and struck the Philistine on the forehead. The stone sank into his forehead, and he fell facedown on the ground."



We encountered the idea, that while singing about God is wonderful and very important, we also need to start "slinging!" We need to do something with our faith. The questions we pondered at Encounter are the questions I present to you: What are we supposed to do with our faith? How are we supposed to use our faith to defeat the "giant?" The Lord calls us to action!!!! Feel free to have this discussion with one of our YOM members and see what they think. Perhaps you have an answer to share with them or they may have an answer for you!

While our older children were living their best life at Mt. Monadnock, the younger children continued to learn about God's love for us. The focus being that even those of us who make mistakes have the grace of God. They learned this concept through the story of Zacchaeus. Jesus showed that a greedy tax collector can be redeemed. Showing love to a person that, on the surface, may seem unlovable, is the way of Jesus. In Matthew 5:44, God tells us, "But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you..." Perhaps this is one way for us to start "slinging" our faith!!!

As I am writing, the Sunday School team has been preparing the children for Palm Sunday and Easter. The presentation of Jesus' journey up to his ascension to Heaven, is different in both classes. The older children are hearing more details surrounding Jesus' suffering, while the younger children are presented with John 3:16, with a focus on "God so loved the world..."

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FROM THE DIRECTOR OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION *(continued from page 3)*

The integrity, kindness, intelligence and willingness to learn that all our children have showed us this year has inspired me to “practice what I preach!” I am so proud of our Sunday School children! They have all set an example for the adults in our church community. I urge you to take the time to have a conversation with any of them regarding the Bible and their relationship with Jesus. Come on down to the Sunday School wing and sit through a class. All are welcome!

A special thank you to Lillian McPherson and Scott Stone who gave up a weekend to help chaperone our awesome teens! The children and I appreciate you!!!

Another special shout out to Michele Schillinger who successfully “held down the fort” for our younger children who are not quite of age for “Church Camp.” The children and I appreciate you as well.

May the Lord be with you always,

Shannon Hartmann

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.



April is Alcohol Awareness Month, Irritable Bowel Syndrome Awareness Month, Medicaid Awareness Month, and National Autism Awareness Month. It is also National Donate Life Month, National Facial Protection Month, Oral Cancer Awareness Month, Parkinson's Awareness Month, Testicular Cancer Awareness Month, Stress Awareness Month, and National Child Abuse Prevention Month.

April 2 is World Autism Awareness Day.

April 7 is World Health Day.

April 29 is National Prescription Drug Take Back Day.

It's spring! The flowers are blooming and we are seeing new signs of life. We all need to take a look at ourselves and think about how we might better take care of ourselves such as: less stress, preventative measures to hopefully avoid illnesses, and simply enjoying life.

I will get rid of any unused drugs you have, or you can take them to the box in the lobby of any police department.

Please remember the equipment in the health closet. I've had outside people borrow some and I am glad to be able to help them.

Happy Spring!

God Bless,

Debbie Pranaitis
Parish Nurse

APRIL SERMONS

4/2 **Palm Sunday** "Palms"

4/9 **EASTER SUNDAY:**

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

10 a.m. CHURCH SERVICE: "He Goes Before You"

4/16 "Faith Like Gold Tested in Fire"

4/23 "They Knew Him in the Breaking of the Bread."

4/30 "A Table Before My Enemies"



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. We hope you are all taking advantage of the nice weather we have been having as well.

Warmer weather also means it's time to clean out the closets. **We will be having another clothing drive at the end of May** and, now that we cannot put textiles in the trash or recycling bins, why not bag them up and bring them in? Exact dates will be coming soon.

Take a book, leave a book. Have you checked out the Michele Fuller Little Library outside the exterior door leading to the medical supply closet (the entrance typically used to visit the church office)? Michele was a past teacher/parent/board member of our school, and we wanted to honor her and her passion for children's literacy. There are both children's and adult books available.

We will be hosting a Papa Gino's night on Tuesday, April 27, from 4-9 PM. You can choose dine-in, delivery or take out. Thank you to everyone who purchased tickets for the calendar prize giveaway. We will begin drawing winners on April 1st. — Good luck to all!

Here We Grow will be closed on Friday, April 7, for Good Friday. We will also be closed the week of April 17-21 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, do not need to be potty trained, or live in Auburn. We are happy to say we are back to offering tours during the school day as well as evening and weekend tours.

Cristi Corey
Director
Here We Grow Preschool

Fuel Fund

As a reminder, there are 4 special offering envelopes for the Fuel Fund throughout the year including the month of April. Any additional donations to help defer fuel costs will be greatly appreciated.

Donations to the Fuel Fund can be made at any time throughout the year. Thank you.

We recently celebrated the baptism of Jaxson David Clark in a private baptism on Sunday afternoon, March 26.

Jaxson is the 5½-month-old son of Andrew and Danielle Clark and grandson to Elizabeth and David Clark.

We pray God's continued blessing upon Jaxson and his family.

*Baptized
in the name
of the Lord*





RAISE SOME DOUGH!

Here We Grow Preschool

will earn **20%** of all qualifying sales
from orders placed on **April 27th**.

When: Thursday, April 27, 2023

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

**COMMUNITY YARD SALE—PLANT SALE!!!
SATURDAY, JUNE 10TH ~ 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 10th!** 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** donations of computer equipment, TV's, clothing, or VCR tapes. Thank you.

SPACES ARE \$20 FOR CHURCH MEMBERS & \$25 FOR NON-MEMBERS. TABLES ARE AVAILABLE TO RENT FOR \$5 EACH.

WE ANTICIPATE THAT SPACES MAY BE LIMITED THIS YEAR. SO, DON'T HESITATE, RESERVE YOUR SPACE NOW!

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

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 be sure to LABEL each pot with the plant name. We're hoping this will be the first year we have no "mystery" plants. A big seller is RHUBARB! . . . cut and bundle in 6 stalks. Also, please remember to support Christine on Whittemore St. in Leicester as she donates lots and lots of plants to us.



TIDINGS is a monthly publication of
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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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OR CURRENT RESIDENT