

2012

Herald of Good TIDINGS

February

"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!'"

Greetings church members and friends!

You are invited to attend the

Service of Installation for

Rev. Brian M. Grover

*on Sunday, February 19, 2012
at 4:00 p.m. to be held at*

First Congregational Church of Auburn
128 Central Street, Auburn, MA
(508) 832-2845

Brian has been called as the newest sitting pastor
for the First Congregational Church of Auburn.

Light refreshments and a time of fellowship will
follow after the installation service.

Those attending should be aware that an offering will be received
during the service to benefit the Central Association Scholarship Fund.

Be My Valentine



One of the reasons we did an Epiphany play rather than a Christmas one is that Epiphany (a sudden, spiritual realization) has not been commercialized, yet. Christmas has come to be dominated by Santa. (Santa, as opposed to St. Nick, is a symbol of commercialism as seen in all the commercials he is in.) I have even found nativity scenes that include Santa and his reindeer.

Now we have Valentine's Day. The last time Valentine's Day was fun, was in Mrs. Hawkins class (4-6th grade). At that time every child made a mail box and every kid got a card from every other kid; no exceptions. Mrs. Lavalley (1-3rd grade) made a big mistake and did not enforce a valentine for everyone, so the girls with the most valentines lorded it over the rest of us; but not in Mrs. Hawkins room. Mrs. Hawkins had taught my brother and mother before me. The term "battle axe" comes to mind when I think of her. First thing every morning we did 100 multiplication problems, failure to get 80 right meant no recess. She was tough, but fair. Under her iron hand Valentine's Day was fun again. There were no worries about being the kid with the least valentines. We all got the same amount. We also all got the same Valentine's treats.

That time of equality was not to last. Soon the prettier, more athletic, richer kids came to dominate the rewards. This is especially true during the middle school years. In high school the school tyranny lessened, we kids treated each other better and with more respect. But, now Valentine's Day took on a romantic quality. Who was dating whom. What were you going to do on Valentine's?

Pressure stronger than middle school came into play. You needed to buy your love diamonds. No! Diamonds do not show love, you needed to make an original, grand gesture of love and romance. But the gesture needed to be something that showed your love and which your beloved loved as well. Pressure indeed!

All this from the feast day (Day of Death) of a man killed in Rome for being a Christian priest and some say marrying people the Emperor had forbidden to be married, in some stories soldiers, in others slaves. Saint Valentine's Feast Day occurs around the time of the old Roman Fertility Festival of Lupercalia. St. Valentine's Day is a fancy fertility festival. I imagine a lot of babies got a start on that day.

It is a time to celebrate what brings us together. Affection, love, and care can help us make wonderful things: a family and a life. The world is all around us. At times the world is a place of wonder, and too often the world is a place of fear, danger and darkness: a place that tries to tear us down. May our families be a place of rest from the world: a place of rest and security, a place of love.

May you get many valentines this year.

God bless,
Pastor Brian

SERMON TITLES FOR FEBRUARY

2/5 "Woe to Me, If I Do Not Proclaim the Gospel!"

Children's Time: 2/5 "Hiding from God"

2/12 "How Far Are You Willing to Go?"

2/12 "Not Doing What You Are Told"

2/19 "Resting on Your Laurels"

2/19 "A 'Yes & No' Kind of Girl"

2/26 "John the Baptist"

2/26 "God's War Bow"



Please keep the following families in your prayers during this difficult time.

Barbara J. (Keyes) Kress, died Dec. 31 2011 at Christopher House in Worcester. Barbara was survived by her stepson, John Kress, her sons, Frederick and David Kress, her 2 daughters, Cheryl Alwine and Suzanne Kress; her sister, Virginia Leone, and her brother, John Keyes, and 8 grandchildren and 1 great-grandchild. Barbara was predeceased by her husband, John H. Kress. A funeral service was held on January 5, 2012 at the Smith & Walker Funeral Home in Putnam, CT with burial in West Thompson Cemetery, Thompson, CT.

Gail E. (Prouty) Olsen, 70, of Amesbury and formerly of Duxbury and Auburn, died Thurs., Jan. 5, 2012 at home. She leaves 4 children, Shelley O. Courtney, Lori A. Besegai, Kristy B. Blundell and Derek M. Olsen; her 2 sisters, Joan B. Bushey and Donna E. Staples; her two brothers, Ronald E. Prouty and Wayne D. Prouty; 10 grandchildren, as well as many nieces and nephews. She was born in Worcester, a daughter of the late Albert Ellsworth and Bernice E. (Dickinson) Prouty and was raised in Auburn. She graduated from Auburn High School and the former Worcester Junior College. She retired as the manager of The Lodge at Jackson Village in Jackson, NH, where she worked for more than 15 years. A funeral service was held here at First Congregational Church on Tuesday, January 10th with burial at Hillside Cemetery.

Gloria V. (Erickson) Rose, 88, passed away Wed., Jan. 25, 2012, at UMass Memorial Med. Center. Her husband, Gordon E. Rose, died in 1992. Gloria was born in Worcester, daughter of Annie Mae Penniman (Ekberg) and Victor A. Erickson. She was a graduate of Auburn High School. Gloria was a member of the First Congregational Church of Auburn and volunteered at its Here We Grow Preschool. She worked at David Clark Co., then retired from Riley Stoker after many years. She leaves a son, Bradford G. Rose and 2 daughters, Sharon Mezzano and Fawn Robidoux; a sister, Barbara Rose; 7 grandchildren and 5 great-grandchildren. A funeral service will be held at the First Congregational Church of Auburn on Sat., Feb. 4, at 10 am. Burial of ashes will follow in Hillside Cemetery. There are no calling hours. Flowers may be sent or donations may be made to the First Congregational Church, Memorial Fund, 128 Central St. Auburn MA 01501.

Outreach Tidings News

The Committee has not found anyone to sell and manage the Hope for Housing (HfH) grocery cards. Outreach members wish to thank the congregation for the support given throughout the last three years. The Worcester based program has not ended. Should anyone be spiritually moved to pick up the project and begin again, HfH will be pleased to have us back. Or, perhaps a different program will replace this one.

Check out *The Daily Auburn* (news report) named: "Walk, Sister, Walk!" Presenters Promote Peace, by Tara Johnson. On January 14, 2012, Auburn First Congregation UCC welcomed four missionaries from Chile, Paraguay and the United States. Their program was powerful as was the message of peace these four women conveyed. They shared a collection of stories, music, prayer and cultural dances. All in attendance were introduced to a unique and beautiful craft called "spider web," intricate patterns woven by the women of Paraguay. The term described the concept of gathering feelings and sensations in a sacred space at the center of each design. Their opening play referenced the connection its author, Elena Huegal, felt between the Chilean coup of 1973 to the devastation of September 11th. Through the Global Ministries, specifically the Shalom Center where all of the women met, their collaborative effort to advocate for peace can best be described by the Hebrew name given to the Center. To paraphrase Elena Huegal, Shalom, "the process of healing," may not always be easy but one we can all strive to achieve. (Go to thedailyauburn.com and click on archive at bottom of page, proceed to 1-16-12.)

A very special thank you to Marion Woodcock for the thirty five pairs of fleece mittens she handmade as a donation to the Goddard School as well as Auburn Youth and Family Services. Thank you to Judy Murphy for her ongoing connection to the Goddard School, her coordination and support given to these special children.

There are two openings in the Outreach Committee. If you haven't committed to a committee, or are simply curious and just wish to visit from time to time, please know you are most welcome anytime with your ideas and fellowship. Outreach meets on the second Wednesday of each month at 6:00 p.m. Our next meeting is scheduled for February 8th.

In Love, Hope, Peace and Understanding,
Sue MacPhee, Outgoing Outreach Committee Secretary



February is Heart Month, Low Vision Awareness Month, and National Children's Dental Health Month. February 3rd is National Wear Red Day and Give Kids a Smile Day. The 7th-14th is Congenital Heart Defect Week, and the 14th is National Donor Day. Please look for information on the Health Table in Fellowship Hall.

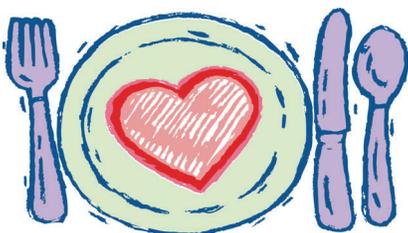
I heard of a safe idea for lighting during a power outage and I want to pass it on. The solar lights in your yard that are just stuck in the ground can be brought in and put into a weighted bottle or vase. They will light inside for you all night, and in the daytime, just put them back outside so they can get the solar power for the next night. This sounds too easy, but it is also safe! No candles or open flames. Seeing there have been several house fires lately, I wanted to pass this along. Solar lights don't cost much and they are safe!

If you need medical equipment such as a wheelchair, tub seat, walker, etc. check in the closet just inside the educational wing. If it's there, and you need it, please take it. I never know what's in there, so if it's there, help yourself, if not, then I'm sorry I can't help. Things come and go. So check again later.

Changes have been made at UMass Hospital and we are no longer able to call and give our church code to receive a listing of church members who are patients at the hospital. Therefore, it is imperative that you notify the church office in the event you are admitted to the hospital. Otherwise, we will have no way of obtaining that information. It has been proven that patients who have their spiritual needs met, as well as their physical, recover more quickly than those who don't. So, have a family member call us if you should find yourself admitted to the hospital.

God Bless!

Debbie Pranaitis
Parish Nurse



COMMUNITY DINNER

COMMUNITY ROAST BEEF SUPPER

Saturday, February 18th at 5 pm

\$10.00 - adults \$5.00 - children

Please join us for a delicious roast beef supper.

Servers/Kitchen Help Needed.

Here We Grow Preschool



Happy Valentine's Day to all. I hope I don't jinx the weather, but we have been very lucky so far; let's hope the above average weather stays with us. I can't wait for spring and all the fresh newness that comes with it.

Our one-on-one tours of the school have started to pick up and I have had the pleasure to meet with some wonderful new families whose children will join us next year. Our Open House will be on March 7th, from 1:00-2:30. At this time we do have openings in the 3 year old sessions and very few in the 4 year-old sessions. If you know of a friend, neighbor, or relative who is looking for a preschool, please send them our way.

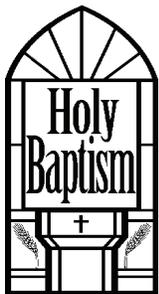
Continuing into the month of February, **Here We Grow** will be busy with Valentine parties on February 13th & 14th. The children will have the opportunity to share cards and goodies with their friends and teachers.

Here We Grow will be running its second largest fundraiser, Hebert Candy Bars. This fundraiser will run the month of February. If you need or *want* a candy bar, there will be a box with Denise in the church office. Thank You for your support. All monies earned go towards field trips, special programs offered throughout the year, equipment for the classrooms, and enrichment classes offered to the children, (zumba, music, karate & aerobics).

The school will be closed for winter break from 2/20-2/24. Hope everyone enjoys special days with their children over this vacation.

Until next month, stay warm and be healthy.

Dawn Murphy
Director, **Here We Grow** Preschool



On Sunday, January 15, 2012 we celebrated the baptisms of Savannah Rose Bjork and Sadie Rose Bjork, daughters of Kristin and Matthew Bjork. Savannah is four years old and Sadie is 3 months old. Proud Nana is Susan Bjork and Great Aunt is Judy Bjork.

We pray the Lord's blessing and guidance in the lives of these two precious children.

Hello,

I am a member of the church and I am looking for some part time work, mother's hours. If anyone in the congregation could use some help with things like cleaning, cooking, shopping, rides to the doctor's or pharmacy, etc. please give me a call at 508-832-8775. I have helped some elderly in the past and my heart really enjoyed it.

Thank You,
Carol Rockwood





TIDINGS FEBRUARY 2012

Happy Valentine's Day! May you all have a month filled with the love of the Holy Spirit and of those around you.

I want to apologize for the tardiness of the acknowledgement, and formally thank the "Pumpkin Ladies, Diane Moore and Shirley Hill" for their generous donation to YOM.

YOM is currently seeking mission trips for the summer and this donation will help defray the costs. We will keep you posted, but we will be having fundraisers throughout the year in preparation.

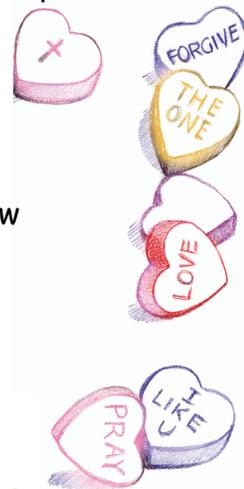
The SOUPer bowl is coming. YOM will be collecting monetary donations and food donations to benefit Auburn Youth and Family Services. We will be collecting on Sunday, February 5. This is a nation wide event to coincide with this other football game I hear people are interested in.

February 12 we will have a craft time with anyone interested in getting some Valentine's Day crafts together. Everyone is welcome and I will have a sign up sheet on the board in Fellowship Hall.

Also on February 12, just in time for Valentine's Day, YOM will be hosting a candy sale. Be sure to include all those sweet people in your lives and help out YOM in the process.

As always I want to thank all the volunteers with Sunday school and welcome the new members of BOCE: Alex Brownwell, Judy Murphy and Carole Murray.

With His guidance we serve,
 Jean McPherson
 Director of Christian Education



SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATIONS

Applications are now available in Fellowship Hall, and in the church office for anyone interested in applying for a scholarship.

Applications are due by April 15th.

JOYFUL NOYSE SCHEDULE

2/5, 2/12, 2/19 ~ 11:15 a.m. rehearsal
 2/26 ~ 9:15 a.m. rehearsal
 "Circle of Love"

CRADLE ROLL ROTATION

2/5 Sue Campbell	2/12 Shirley Hill
2/19 Melynn Guilford	2/26 Elizabeth Allain

MIDDLE SCHOOL ROTATION

2/5 Alex Brownwell	2/12 Connie Hanks
2/19 Jen Bohn	2/26 Rich McPherson

COFFEE HOUR HOSTS

2/5, 2/12	Library Committee
2/19, 2/26	Stewardship Committee
3/4, 3/11	Outreach Committee

Library Tidings by Gloria Whitehead

Final gifts are so often closely related to the heart that it seemed fitting to choose February and Valentine's Day to acquaint everyone with this beautifully written book entitled *Final Gifts*. It was gifted to the library awhile ago by Sue Campbell in memory of her mother, Ruth Hibbard. Take heart! As you get into the book, you will see an association with February 14th. *Final Gifts'* authors are Maggie Callanan and Patricia Kelley, two exceptional hospice nurses who, as evaluated by highly recognized professionals, compiled a "handbook" for understanding with special recognition the needs and communication from the dying. Now, don't cast aside the book after reading that sentence. The book is so full of so many different stories of individuals and the families of terminally ill patients you might term it morose; not so. Of course, there are tragic situations, but you'll find exposure or reaction to new insights and peaceful acceptance — even joy.

Final Gifts is so full of how an assortment of pieces to the puzzle of our lives can be fit together as it draws to a close, it might be helpful to make a note of this book or tack this report in a place where it might be useful sometime in the future. It is a treasure.

Life is eternal and love is immortal,
and death is only a horizon;
and a horizon is nothing save the limit of our sight.

— Rossiter Worthington Raymond (1840-1918)

We continue to hold scheduled potluck suppers (a combination of the "Spirit Suppers" and a book/movie club - "Dinner and Discussion") in the vestry. The next get together will be on **Tuesday, February 7th at 6 p.m.** We will be discussing the book, *Courageous* by A.J. Jacobs.

Remember, you do NOT have to read the book; if you just want to come for food and fellowship, please do! EVERYONE is invited to join us for any or all parts of the evenings. Come for dinner, come for just the discussion.

Looking ahead, we will be discussing the book, *Have a Little Faith* by Mitch Albom, at our potluck supper on **Tuesday, March 13th**. A complete list of books, movies and dates is available on the table in both fellowship hall and the adult library. Please see Jen Bohn if you have any questions.

Dear Church Members,

Marjorie Zimmerman would like to begin coming to Church on a weekly basis. We now have two Church members who have graciously agreed to take her; however, we would like to have a back-up call list in place for Sundays when they're not available to drive her. Marjorie lives at Pakachoag Village and has a walker. If you're able to assist her with getting to Church on an occasional Sunday, please give her a call at 508-832-0767.

Thank you.



Please join us on Sunday,
February 12th at 10 a.m.
as we celebrate
BOY SCOUT SUNDAY.

In the event of inclement weather we have set up accounts with WTAG and WSRS radio stations, and with Channel 4 and Channel 5 TV stations enabling us to report Church service cancellations with them. However, if weather is severe enough to result in area power outages we may not have the capability to contact them. So, you should always use your best judgment, using caution when deciding whether to venture out to service during stormy weather.



**Tidings 2012
Subscription Renewal Form**

In an effort to offset the cost of publishing the Monthly *Tidings*, we are asking for members and friends to support a voluntary subscription. Your participation is entirely optional and will not affect whether or not you receive the *Tidings*.

Annual Renewal - (10 issues, no July or Aug. issue)

Please enclose a check or money order for \$10 payable to: **First Congregational Church.**

Please write "**Tidings**" in the memo section.

Mail to: First Congregational Church
128 Central St., Auburn, MA 01501

Name: _____

Address: _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

Thank You!

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

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