



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!’”

Poor February

The only good thing I can say about February is that it is short, only 28 days. Some 2000 years ago February was robbed. Actually, if I am anthropomorphizing months, it was assaulted and 2 whole days were cut from it. The tyrant, Roman Emperor Augustus, cut 2 days from February and gave them to July and August, the months renamed in his and his adopted father’s honor, so they could be 31 days long. I can never decide if Augustus was really cool or really creepy.

The weather in February is the worst. What was fun in December, is getting old in February. In the cold and darkness of February, winter hits hard and even I, who enjoys snow, start to get sick of the cold.

I have already discussed my dislike for the main February holiday, Valentine’s Day. Notice how the “Saint” has mostly been dropped from the holiday. The only other holiday in the month is Presidents’ Day. What does your family do to celebrate Presidents’ Day? Mine did nothing. Maybe as a kid I used my day off from school to play in the snow, but that was it.

This year Lent starts with Ash Wednesday on February 13. Lent is a time to prepare for Easter and Spring. Traditionally people ate the last of their meat on Fat Tuesday (literal meaning of Mardi Gras) because meat butchered in the fall would be getting close to poisonous. Today we are encouraged to do a Lenten fast or discipline. We are to fast from something we know is not good for us (candy, caffeine) or discipline ourselves into doing something good for us (exercise, reading more). In the past I have given up chocolate, (easy) and caffeine (hard). I think this year I will discipline myself into walking more.

We will have our normal Ash Wednesday service at 7 PM and depart in silence. New this year, we will have a Lenten Series beginning with an evening meal, followed by a video and discussion. The meal will start at 6 with the video starting at 6:30 and closing prayer at 7. The Wednesday night schedule is:

- Feb 20 *Hidden Treasure* - Shepherd’s pie by the MacPhees
- Feb 27 *Samaritan* - soup to be determined (provided by Ron Hanks and Jen Bohn)
- March 6 *The Shrewd Manager* - Corn chowder with ham sandwiches and dessert (provided by Trustees: Cindy Ryan, Cindy Dube and Diane Moore)
- March 13 *The Widow & Judge* - Chicken and wild rice soup and ham sandwiches (provided by Deacons: Sue Campbell, Linda Hardy and Mike Schillinger)
- March 20 *Prodigal Sons* - soup to be determined (provided by Melynn Guilford and volunteers please; and grilled cheese sandwiches by the confirmands)

I suggested the food be soup and sandwich. Shepherd’s pie is on the menu for the first dinner, so I guess a meal other than soup and sandwich is ok. Simple, good food is what I am thinking because 6PM on a Wednesday night does not leave much prep time. The plan is to have a committee or individuals (2-4) sign up to bring food, about 2 gallons of soup and 20-30 sandwiches; plus people to do set up and clean up. Remaining participants will bring a free will offering to cover the expense of the food with any extra money going to a cause to be determined later. Please join us for good food, a retelling of the parables in a modern setting and, hopefully, good discussion.

Pastor Brian

PROJECT LINUS - Providing Security through Blankets

Remember Linus from Charles Schultz's "Peanuts" comic strip? He is the lad with the security blanket and the inspiration for Project Linus, a national organization whose purpose is to provide blankets for children who have been traumatized by illness, loss of a family member, disaster, or a personal, life-changing event.

For the past 15 years, Carole Murray has chaired the Worcester Area Chapter of Project Linus. Under her encouragement and direction, area folks have prepared over 33,000 blankets for distribution. Every week volunteers distribute anywhere from 50 to 100 blankets to both campuses of UMassMemorial for newborns in the Neo-natal Intensive Care Unit (NICU), Pediatric Oncology, Pediatric Surgery and the ER's to provide comfort, security and loving warmth to a child. Throughout the year, as our supply supports the need, blankets are delivered to many other agencies that provide services to children, such as women's shelters like Abby's House and the Women's Veterans Shelter in Worcester, and whole family support like "A Place Called Home" which is the Interfaith Hospitality's new house on June Street in Worcester. In addition, individual, personal donations are made to children locally who have experienced a trauma, such as the loss of a family member or the diagnosis of a serious illness.

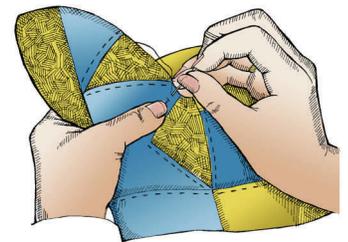
2012 was a banner year for our chapter. The dozen or so women who meet each Tuesday morning from 9 to noon in the old kitchen on the lower level of our church, sewed Project Linus labels, checked for pins and defects, carefully folded and hugged 3,017 blankets that went out the door to bring a hug, smile, warmth, security and love to each recipient.

Do you like to knit, crochet, or sew fabric quilts? We are looking for at-home crafters who can provide Project Linus with child-sized blankets (36" X 36" up to "40 X 60" is ideal). They can be dropped off any Tuesday morning all year long at the old kitchen/vestry entrance.

There is always a need for blankets all the time. Project Linus welcomes donations of 100% cotton fabric and flannel, fleece fabric, soft yarn (no angora, mohair or fuzzy yarns), thread, and batting. When you are shopping at your favorite fabric or yarn store, consider purchasing an extra yard or two of a children's print fabric or an extra skein of baby soft yarn to donate. Put coupons to good use!

Our chapter responds to national crises like Hurricane Katrina in the past, currently Hurricane Sandy, acts of violence or any event where children are affected. Our response to "Sandy" was 107 blankets which emptied our reserve. We did not know that a month later a "wish" would be made for 700 blankets for New Town, CT. Sister chapters across the country responded immediately, fulfilling the wish.

In cases like these, each chapter must absorb the cost for shipping blankets that are more than a car-ride away. Fundraising is one of the necessities of operating a chapter of Project Linus. Carole welcomes donations of cash or checks all year round. Funds are used for shipping expenses as well as for materials. February 14 is Valentine's Day. Warm your heart with a donation - whether it is materials, monetary or a prayer for the continued good work of Project Linus. Checks may be mailed to Carole Murray, PO Box 161, Auburn, MA 01501. Blankets, cash, or checks for Project Linus may also be personally handed to Carole, or Marion Woodcock, Charlotte Steffen, Sue Campbell, or Carol Luther, if that is easier.



Submitted by Carol Luther

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.

COFFEE HOUR HOSTS

2/3, 2/10	Library Committee
2/17, 2/24	Outreach Committee
3/3, 3/10	Stewardship Committee

Please be in prayer for the following families during this time of loss.

Eileen (Duncan) Holt, 90

Eileen (Duncan) Holt, 90, died peacefully on January 3, 2013, surrounded by her loving family. Her husband of 57 years, Howard, died in 2004. From 1954-1977, Eileen and Howard lived in Auburn, MA, and then retired to Florida until 2007. Most recently, she lived in the Overlook Community in Charlton, MA. Eileen leaves her son, David Holt, and his wife, Kathleen of Sutton, MA, and her daughter, Linda Nissly, and her husband, David of Fort Myers, FL. She is also survived by 4 grandchildren and 7 great-grandchildren. Eileen cherished time spent with her family. She also had a passion for dogs, flowers, and most especially sewing - producing hundreds of quilts for Project Linus in the past five years. She will be remembered by her family and friends for her self-sacrificing love, her gentle encouragement, and her keen sense of humor.

At Eileen's request, her memorial service was private.



Barbara R. Niles (1924 - 2013)

Barbara R. Niles, 88, of Auburn passed away Friday, January 4, 2013. She was born March 20, 1924 in Auburn and spent her entire life there with her family. She was the daughter of John W. Huban and Ada (Milligan) Huban. She is predeceased by her husband of 62 years, Fred R. Niles; a sister, Winifred Griffiths; a son, Donald F. Niles; two daughters: Elizabeth Gervais and Gayle L. Niles. She is survived by a daughter, Susan Fournier of New Hampshire; 7 grandchildren and 4 great grandchildren. She was a member of the First Congregational Church of Auburn and taught Sunday School there for 18 years. A memorial Service is being planned for the spring with burial at Hope Cemetery in May. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the First Congregational Church of Auburn, 128 Central Street, Auburn, MA 01501.

"I am the resurrection and the Life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies." John 11:25

Happy New Year, everyone!

Our Stewardship Committee this year is:

Ellie Lowell (Chair)
 Sue Klaucke (Secretary)
 Rich McPherson / Rufus Guilford (Council Reps)
 Cliff Petersen
 Bev Scobie



We look forward to serving First Congregational in the coming year. We have already gotten some useful feedback on last year's Stewardship campaign. We'd love to hear your thoughts and suggestions--what did you like? What could we do differently?

With your help, 2013 will be a banner year for our church.

Sincerely,

Your Stewardship Committee



February is National Heart Month, Low Vision Month, and National Children's Dental Health Month. The 13th-19th is Muscular Dystrophy Awareness Week. The 21st-March 1st is National Disorders Awareness Week. February 14, besides being Valentine's Day, is Congenital Heart Defects Day and National Donor Day.

Please take a look in the closet, just inside the door to the educational wing, if you need any medical equipment. It comes and goes; so if something is there that you need, please take it. If what you're looking for is not there, sorry, check again at a later date.

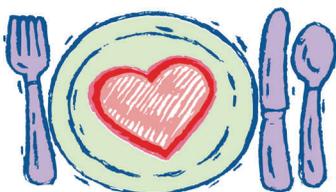
The flu, pneumonia, and upper respiratory viruses are around. The upper respiratory viruses are worse than a cold, but you don't ache all over, like with the flu. Hand washing is still the best preventative medicine. Instead of singing "Happy Birthday" while washing your hands, try praying the "Lord's Prayer" in the same amount of time.

If anyone wants information about a medical alert system, please check the table in Fellowship Hall. Doug Brothers has information on the health table. There is other information available as well. I will have heart related information available. Please remember, if you think you might be having a stroke or a heart attack, call 9-1-1 immediately. There are medications that can slow or reverse your situation, but they have to be given within a few hours. Don't wait!

Have a Heart Healthy Month,
Debbie Pranaitis, Parish Nurse

People to People Program

Congratulations to Cassie Stockhaus! Cassie has been selected, interviewed and accepted to participate in the People to People Student Ambassador Program and will be traveling to France, England, Wales and Ireland this July (the 1st - 20th). The People to People Program was founded by President Dwight D. Eisenhower in 1956. He believed that if people from different cultures could come together in peace and friendship, eventually, so would countries. The program tuition is very costly. Donations to help offset these expenses would be most appreciated. Please speak with Cassie, Nick, or Lori Stockhaus for more information on how you can help — thank you!



COMMUNITY DINNER

COMMUNITY ROAST BEEF SUPPER

Saturday, February 16th at 5 pm

\$10.00 - adults \$5.00 - children

Please join us for a delicious roast beef supper.

Servers/Kitchen Help Always Appreciated.

Here We Grow Preschool



With Valentine's Day right around the corner, LOVE is in the air. While I am on the topic of air, it is really cold today. We have had an all time high of one degree. Needless to say, we have been using the indoor playground quite a bit these last few days. We realize how lucky we are to have such a large space to use when the weather is uncooperative. We all wait patiently for spring and all the fresh newness that comes with it.

With January over, I am happy to say that the phone calls are coming in to set up one-on-one tours of the school. Some new families will be joining us this upcoming school year with some past families returning. Our Open House will be on March 6th from 12:30-2:00. At this time, we do have openings in the 3 year old sessions, the young 4's session and a few in the older 4's sessions. If you know of a friend, neighbor, or relative who is looking for a preschool, please send them our way.

Tomorrow, January 24th, our licensor from the Department of Early Education and Care will be in to look over the school, offer suggestions and guidance and, hopefully, re-license us for another two years. I will let you know the results next month.

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

Here We Grow will be selling Hebert candy bars again this year. 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 toward field trips, special programs offered throughout the year, equipment for the classrooms, and enrichment classes offered to the children (zumba, music, karate and music jamz).

The school will be closed for winter break from 2/18 - 2/22. It will be a time to catch up on rest and all those little projects that accumulate around the house.

Until next month, stay warm and be healthy.

Dawn Murphy
Director

Here We Grow Preschool

Jean Benoit wishes to thank everyone for their thoughts and prayers, and she would also like to thank the Deacons and congregation for the lovely Christmas basket.

CRADLE ROLL ROTATION

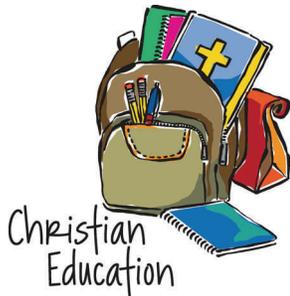
2/3	Cindy Dube	2/10	Sue Campbell
2/17	Marion Woodcock	2/24	Tori Stockhaus
3/3	Bessie Morgan	3/10	Jen Bohn

Happy 69th Wedding Anniversary!!!

Donald & Carolyn Slongwhite will be celebrating their 69th wedding anniversary on February 27th.

Congratulations!





TIDINGS FEBRUARY 2013

Happy Valentine's Day! May you all find joy in the knowledge that God, our Father, has, and always will have, unconditional love for each of us.

The Confirmation class is planning to attend CityReach. Look for more information to come once we have secured the dates.

In Sunday school we will begin our unit on teaching us how to pray using the "Lord's Prayer." Again, thank you to those who are coming out of their comfort zone to take 3 weeks to impact the lives of OUR children. This month's teachers are: Ron Hanks (science), Bev Scobie and Lillian McPherson (games), Beth Szydlik (art) and Rich McPherson (video). I want to thank last month's teachers for a job well done - Nan Johnson (cooking), Karen Facticeau (art), Janice Green (story) and Rich McPherson (video).

PLEASE CONSIDER TEACHING A UNIT. If you cannot teach, please consider assisting someone who is teaching. Some of our current teachers started out as assistants and realized how easy it was. I will help you in any way I can to make this rewarding for both you, and the children. Catch me any Sunday or give me a call, 508-832-5677.

UPCOMING UNITS

March	The Easter Story
April	The Good Samaritan
May	Living God's Word - Friendship

June 2 will be Children's Sunday and the Annual Church Picnic on the front lawn.

RELAY FOR LIFE

If you are interested in joining our Relay for Life Team please sign up in Fellowship Hall on the Sunday school bulletin board (the pink sheet). Our first meeting will be February 10 after church. This is just to bounce ideas and pick a name for our team. Hope to see many of you there. If you cannot come, but are still interested, just speak to me and we can add you to our list.

UPCOMING ACTIVITIES

Palm Sunday Breakfast
Easter Egg Hunt
30 Hr. Famine
YOM Trip to Monadnock Bible Conference
Other activities as they develop

With His Guidance We Serve,
Jean McPherson
Director of Christian Education

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



Library Tidings by Gloria Whitehead

Finally, this review is a bit of exposure to a great book which Sue Klaucke picked up, by chance, in an airport. Its title is *Gray Matter*. Its author, Dr. David J. Levy, is an outstanding neurosurgeon who states that the role of prayer in healthcare is a gray matter in itself. A neurosurgeon operates on the brain - the human body's most valuable real estate. Just a little info – although the brain represents only 2% of body weight, it receives 15% of the human body's blood supply. During surgery, if an aneurysm ruptures, blood streams out so quickly and freely it floods the work area causing it to be as though you were trying to fix a leaky pipe under muddy water – not easy to stop the flow. However, in 7 years of practice, Dr. Levy had never heard of any doctors who had prayed with their patients.

Yet, what about the emotional and spiritual aspects of those on whom he was about to operate. There were no guidelines to follow. Nervous, yet determined, and without a plan, it took up to the last minute before Mrs. Jones was to go into surgery when he blurted out, "Can I pray with you?" She looked as though something may have gone wrong, but responded, "Okay." How did it start? "God, we thank you for Mrs. Jones" and on to the fact that God had known her since she was a baby - knew all about her vessels and would He help the doctor to fix them - to please give the doctor wisdom and skill - the success in surgery, "In the Name of Jesus. Amen." When he looked up, his patient was crying and smiling peacefully. Peace had overshadowed fear and the case went well in all respects.

The thought continued, I am good at what I do, but, ultimately, I cannot control the outcome of your surgery. We need God's help and I'm not ashamed to ask for it.

As incidents and surgeries multiply, so do reactions, but you'll be captivated and moved as you experience a few surgeries. If you're just thumbing through the book, scan through page 83 and then turn to page 90. Chapter 5 is titled, *Facing My Colleagues*. Dr Levy had never prayed with the nurses. Habit had been to wait until they and anesthesia personnel had cleared out – a trying issue. It took a couple of pages to "air" this. Then, by surprise, awhile later (months) a nurse was heading out of the room of a patient who was about to enter surgery when Dr. Levy asked the patient if he could pray. The nurse quietly returned and stood behind family members. When finished, the nurse approached Dr. Levy who expected a curbside consult. You guessed it! The doctor's stomach flipped when she said she wanted to join him next time and would he call her when he was about to pray. Would he include other nurses who were interested? He also is sensitive to allow nurses to say no. Rather than be left out, the technologists have also joined. Then it included a Muslim doctor and Rajiv, a Hindu doctor, Jeff and Heather from a medical device company and Dottie from Australia. There is more to tell, BUT leaving out additional details – makes for all the more reason this is a book that is worth your time.

I'll just close by mentioning that the final chapter, *Memorable Cases*, and a final word from the author will leave you with thoughts that will live on.



Happy 90th Birthday to Maybelle Stone!

On Valentine's Day, Feb. 14th, Maybelle Stone turns 90 years old! It is believed that she may be the oldest (longest) member of the church. She was born in 1923 and baptized the same year at her home on Oak Street in Auburn, most likely by Rev. Wheelock. May has been involved in Women's Fellowship, chairman of the Church Fair for several years, served on the Board of Trustees and taught Sunday School. Happy Birthday, Maybelle, and God Bless!

Congratulations to the Murray Family on the recent birth of their great-granddaughter, Aleana Lyn White.

Aleana was born on January 9th and weighed in at 7 lbs.,

10 oz. Her proud parents are Jeffrey and Maranda White and first time grandma is Bob and Carole's daughter, Lorna Krumpfer.

Although Aleana decided to make an early appearance, mother and daughter are doing just fine!



February Sermon Topics:

- Feb. 3 "Temptations"
- Feb. 10 "Food: Do We Worry About Food or Eat When We Worry?"
- Feb. 17 "Fame Leads to the Fall"
- Feb. 24 "Temptation Power"

Children's Sermons:

- Feb. 3 "Temptation"
- Feb. 10 "Boy Scout Is . . ."
- Feb. 17 "Water from the Well"
- Feb. 24 "Goofy"



Join us for our
Ash Wednesday Service
on February 13th at 7 p.m.

DINNER & DISCUSSION

We continue to hold scheduled potluck suppers with book/movie discussions in the downstairs kitchen. The next get together will be on **Tues., Feb. 26th at 5:30 p.m.** when we will be viewing and discussing the movie, *To Save a Life*, a Christian movie about teens, their problems and reactions.

Remember, EVERYONE is invited to join us for any or all parts of the evening. Come for dinner, come for just the discussion.

Looking ahead, we will be discussing the book, *The Gift of the Jews* by Thomas Cahill, a short history book about the Jewish gift to the history of ideas, at our potluck supper on **Tues., Mar. 26th at 6 p.m.** A complete list of books, movies and dates is available on the table in both fellowship hall and the adult library. Please call the church office with any questions.

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doing Christ's work in the world.*

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