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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

In Numbers is a little story I love. As Israel is marching from Egypt to the promised land they understandably upset the people whose land they are marching through. An army of nomads would tend to make people nervous. So Barak, king of Moab, calls on the prophet Balaam to come curse the Israelites so Barak can go to war. From Numbers Chapter 22:

22 God’s anger was kindled because he (Balaam) was going, and the angel of the Lord took his stand in the road as his adversary. Now he was riding on the donkey, and his two servants were with him. 23 The donkey saw the angel of the Lord standing in the road, with a drawn sword in his hand; so the donkey turned off the road, and went into the field; and Balaam struck the donkey, to turn it back onto the road. 24 Then the angel of the Lord stood in a narrow path between the vineyards, with a wall on either side. 25 When the donkey saw the angel of the Lord, it scraped against the wall, and scraped Balaam’s foot against the wall; so he struck it again. 26 Then the angel of the Lord went ahead, and stood in a narrow place, where there was no way to turn either to the right or to the left. 27 When the donkey saw the angel of the Lord, it lay down under Balaam; and Balaam’s anger was kindled, and he struck the donkey with his staff. 28 Then the Lord opened the mouth of the donkey, and it said to Balaam, “What have I done to you, that you have struck me these three times?” 29 Balaam said to the donkey, “Because you have made a fool of me! I wish I had a sword in my hand! I would kill you right now!” 30 But the donkey said to Balaam, “Am I not your donkey, which you have ridden all your life to this day? Have I been in the habit of treating you this way?” And he said, “No.”

31 Then the Lord opened the eyes of Balaam, and he saw the angel of the Lord standing in the road, with his drawn sword in his hand; and he bowed down, falling on his face.

I love stories where animals talk, especially ones where they talk to humans. This story has many lessons. First, sometimes the creatures we think are beneath us see God and what is right most keenly. The story shows how even an expert, like a prophet, can be taught to be better at their job in the most unexpected ways. It also speaks to the wisdom of animals, there were a lot less drunk riding-an-animal crashes than there are drunk driving crashes.

In the RSV version the animal is not called a donkey but, instead, a 3 letter word that we now consider a curse word. The RSV was published around 70 years ago. The language has changed since then. Is it time to update our pew bibles?

May we all see as clearly as Balaam’s donkey.

Pastor Brian

This is the first February in a long time that we will not have Lent. **Lent will start on March 1.** We will again have **Wednesday night soup and sandwich meals** with a 30 minute talk after the meal. This year I would like the talk to be based on questions you might have. There will be cards in the pews to fill out or you can email, or post on Facebook, your questions and we can discuss them after a hearty meal in March and early April. **Please look for the sign-up sheet in Fellowship Hall** for groups/individuals to provide soup and/or sandwiches.

On another note, we will be looking to do our **Worship Planning Meeting on Sunday, February 19.** This is a meeting at which we go over the details for our special services in the spring. All members are welcome at the meeting if they have input on our Easter, Holy Week, or Lenten services. In addition to Pastor Brian, Heather and Jean, **representatives from the BOCE, Deacons and Music Committee are expected to attend.**

FROM THE DIRECTOR OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Happy Valentine's Day everyone! I hope you all enjoy a treat or two this Valentine's Day.

In Sunday school our classrooms are filling on a regular basis and we are needing to find space for our middle school group who do not have a permanent spot to claim. I know that in the other classes we enjoy "our" space and are able to fill it with weekly crafts and posters that the kids make to remind them of previous lessons and give them a sense of belonging. Hopefully this will occur for the older kids as well.



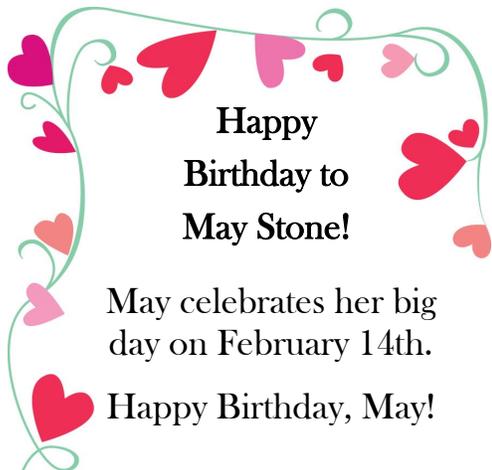
Youth on a Mission will not be going to Monadnock this year due to scheduling issues. We had a meeting on Jan.29 to discuss our other options. I will update you in the next *Tidings*. YOM was also talking about a fundraiser coming up. We hope to hold a Valentine's candy sale on Feb.12. We will keep you posted in the bulletin. As always, we thank you in advance for supporting the teens.

Confirmation is on track and the girls will be going to CityReach soon to work with the CityReach staff in assisting the homeless in Boston. Please see the donation list on page 3.

As always I invite you to come talk with me about teaching. I am here most Thursday nights and would love to go over the curriculum to show you how easy it is. If you need another day to meet, please see me after church. Listening to the kids discuss the bible lessons and watching them help each other look verses up in the Bible (even 1st grade), gives a new hope to the future of the church. Please consider being a part of that. BE THE LIGHT (Matt. 5:14)

With God all things are possible (Matt. 9:26) —

Jean McPherson, Director of Religious Education



Happy
Birthday to
May Stone!

May celebrates her big
day on February 14th.

Happy Birthday, May!

COMMUNITY SUPPER

Saturday, February 18th at 5 pm

\$10.00 - adults
children 10 & under are free

Please join us for a delicious
roast pork supper.

At this time, no group has signed
up to help serve, so your help
will be greatly appreciated.

Laura Koopman wishes to thank the congregation . . .

"I want to thank EVERYBODY who has been so kind,
helpful and generous to me these past years.
I want to thank you ALL.
It is very much appreciated."

COFFEE HOUR HOSTS

1/29, 2/5	Stewardship Committee
2/12, 2/19	Outreach Committee
2/26, 3/5	Personnel Committee

**Many thanks to the Shoblom Family for hosting
coffee hour on January 22nd.**

SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATIONS

Look for applications in Fellowship
Hall, and in the church office for anyone
interested in applying for a scholarship.

Applications are due by April 15th.



On Sunday, January 22nd, we celebrated the baptism of 9-month-old Shea Robert Crone, the son of Peter Crone and Angela Muller-Crone.

On January 29th we celebrated the baptisms of Brady Gordon Sharr and Connor James Luhta. Brady is the 5-month-old son of Andy and Katie Sharr. Connor is the 4-month-old son of Matthew and Meagan Luhta.

We pray for God's continued guidance and blessing upon these precious little ones and their families.

CityReach Donation List

The confirmation class will be participating in CityReach-Common Cathedral on February 10-11th. CityReach is an overnight urban outreach program for youth (with accompanying adults) from churches of any denomination. The program gives these young people the opportunity to learn first hand about homelessness from people who have experienced it. During the 20 hour session, participants join CityReach staff in street ministry and offer hospitality, food and clothing.

You may support the confirmands by donating the following items:

Peanut butter, jelly, fluff, tuna fish, egg salad, cheese, cold cuts, hard boiled eggs, soft fruit (oranges, bananas, grapes), cookies, brownies, soft granola bars or other individually packaged snacks, juice

All kinds of carrying cases such as backpacks, tote bags, fanny packs, small suitcases with wheels (used and in good condition)

Travel-size toiletries (soap, shampoo, deodorant, lotion, lip balm, toothpaste), toothbrushes, shaving cream in small sizes, disposable razors, and tampons (no aftershave or mouthwash containing alcohol)

New white socks (there can never be too many of these), new underwear (again, there can never be too many and be sure to bring 80% of the underwear for men; all sizes, from small to XL needed), sleeping bags and blankets (clean and in good condition)

Clothing (please, no children's clothes, dress clothes, slippers, bathrobes, pajamas or out-of-season clothing). Think about what you would wear camping or hiking. Comfortable, rugged clothing is what is needed. About 80% should be for men or unisex. Large sizes (XL, XXL and XXXL) are very much in demand.

Hooded sweatshirts and sweat pants are much appreciated.

USED CLOTHING including:

Warm coats, sweatpants and sweatshirts (especially hooded), sweaters, long-sleeve shirts, jeans, khakis and other casual pants, waterproof boots, comfortable shoes, sneakers, hats, waterproof gloves, coats, belts

THANK YOU!

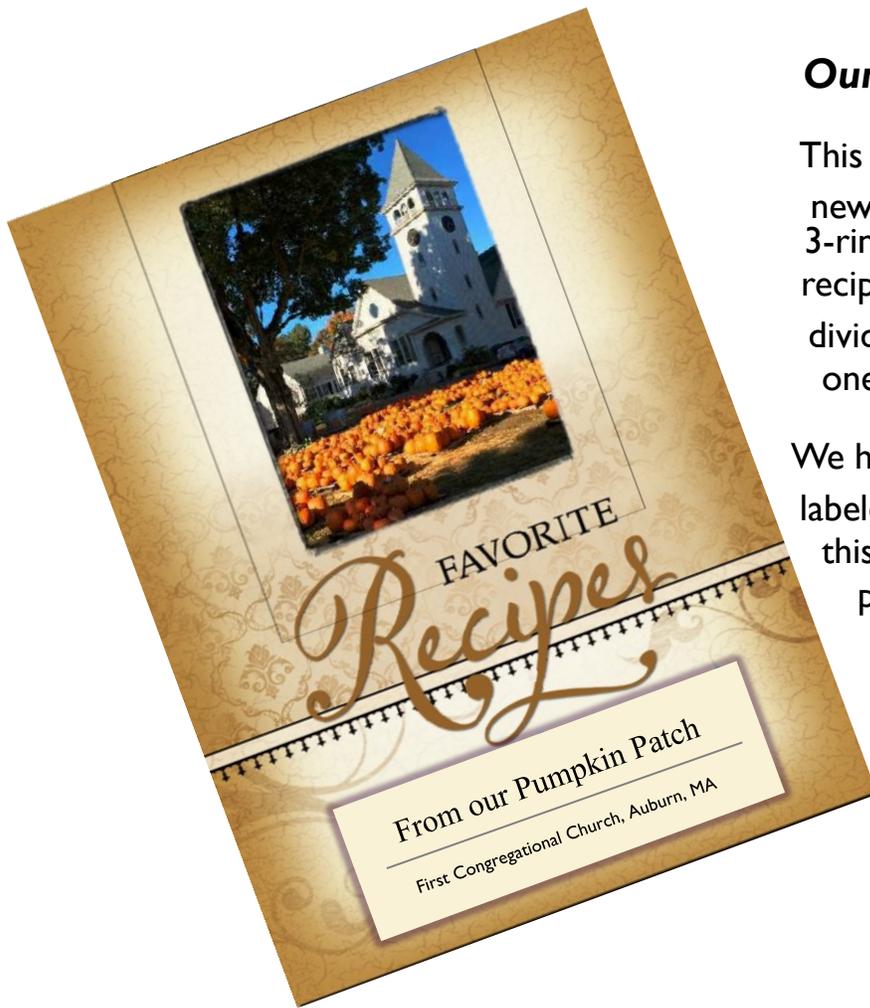
February Sermon Topics:

- Feb. 5 "Can't Be Right with God & Oppress Your Neighbor"
- Feb. 12 "Choose One, Life or Death"
- Feb. 19 "Charity in a Time of Famine"
- Feb. 26 "Until the Day Dawns" — Children's Time
"What Do We Do with Jesus?"



♣ Boy Scout Sunday ♣

Join us on **February 5th** as we celebrate **Boy Scout Sunday** during our 10 a.m. service.



Our Cookbook has gone to print!!

This is what the cover will look like...our newest FCC cookbook will be a hardcover 3-ring binder with over 200 of your favorite recipes inside. It will have traditional tabbed dividers with scripture on the front of each one and helpful kitchen hints on the back.

We had one additional divider added which is labeled "Our Favorite Pumpkin Recipes" and this section will feature all the pumpkin recipes you contributed. Towards the back, we've added a pocket envelope to hold your personal favorite recipes that did not make it into print within the cookbook. There is an alphabetical listing of all the recipes in the back as well as a section listing the names of all the contributors and what page they can be found on.

Our intention of this cookbook is for it to become the favorite in your collection. I would like to thank all cooks - past and present - who contributed their favorite recipes to this cookbook whether it was by submitting to us hard copy or by going into Typensave and entering them right online. Several recipes were taken directly from our previous two FCC cookbooks (published 1975 and 1995) and it is wonderful to share some of these treasured recipes with you, especially those from loved ones who have passed on. These are noted with an "In Memory of" symbol next to the title of the recipe.

A big thank you goes out to Lynn Largesse who spent many nights in front of her TV entering recipes for us...without her, I truly would not have been able to send this to print...at least not yet...I'd still be entering recipes...!! Thanks, Lynn!

Our cookbook will be priced at \$15 apiece and any moneys earned above the cost of printing will go to the general fund of the church. This cookbook will make a great gift for someone's birthday, anniversary, wedding, shower, Christmas, Mother's Day, and any other special occasion as well as being a great addition to your collection.

We'll let you know when the cookbooks are printed and on hand so you can purchase one... or two!

Michele Schillinger



February is American Heart Month, National Cancer Prevention Month, National Children's Dental Health Month, and Low Vision Month. February 3rd is National Wear Red Day and February 14 is National Donor Day.

February 12-18 is National Cardiac Rehabilitation Week

February 12-18 is Random Acts of Kindness Week

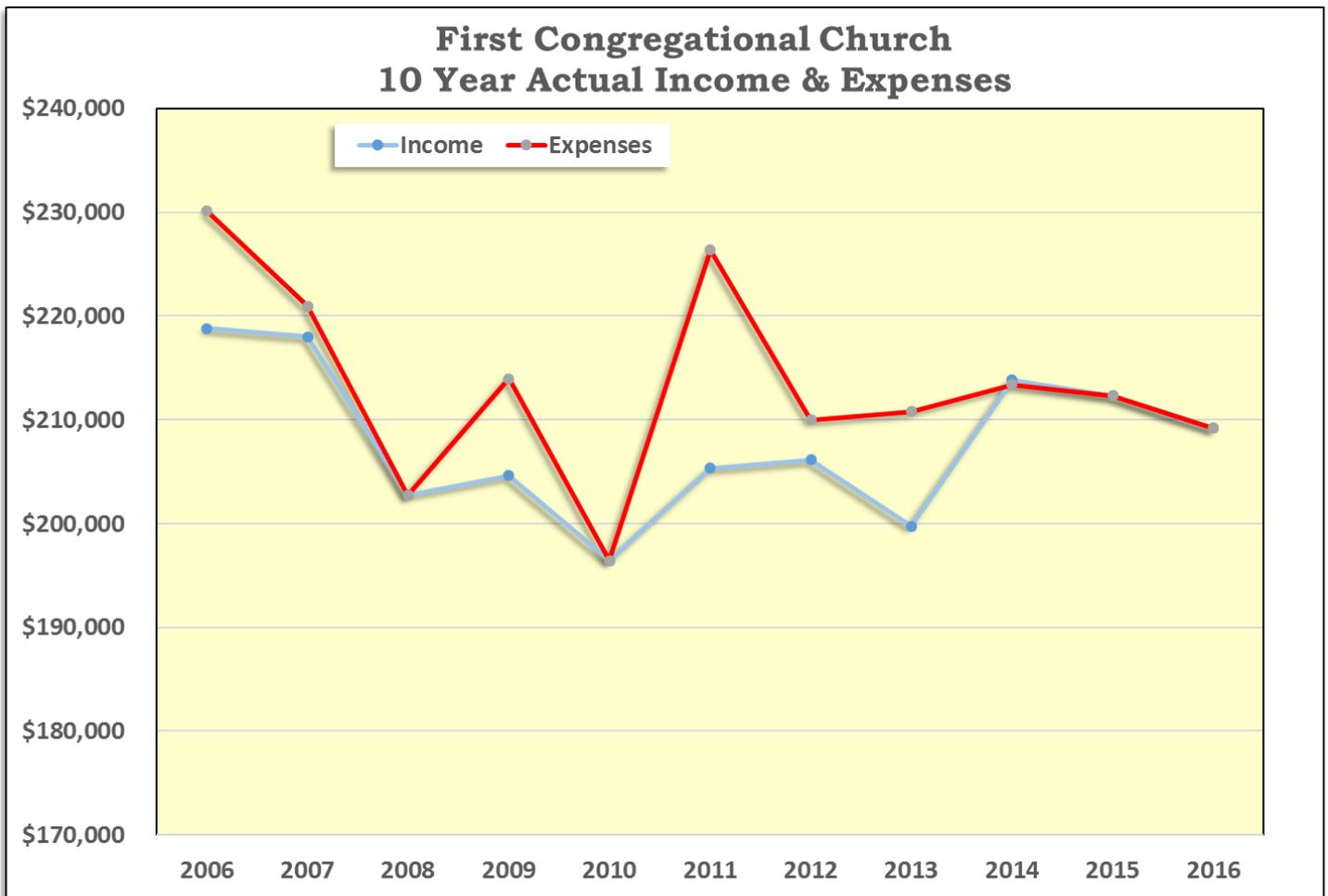
I recently heard of one of our parishioners needing the help of EMT's and I was happy to hear that the File For Life was on the refrigerator and up to date. Fortunately, this wasn't a life or death situation, but family members saw how easy the process was after the 9-1-1 call was made. This parishioner was checked by EMT's and didn't need to go to the hospital.

There are red folders on the health table in Fellowship Hall and the papers to fill out your information. The EMT's and paramedics recommend filling out a second paper, so if there is an emergency, they can take a copy and go! Time is important!

Have a Happy, Healthy February.

Debbie Pranaitis, Parish Nurse

Please look for periodic financial updates from the Church Treasurer, Nick Stockhaus. Below is a comparison of income and expenses spanning the last 10 years.



Potluck & Movie/Book Discussions

On February 21st at 5:30 p.m. we'll view the movie, *Miracles from Heaven*, based on the incredible true story of the Beam family. When Christy (Jennifer Garner) discovers her 10-year-old daughter Anna has a rare, incurable disease, she becomes a ferocious advocate for her daughter's healing. See how a true-life miracle unfolds that leaves medical specialists mystified, her family restored, and their community inspired.

On March 21st we will discuss the book, *Trees in the Pavement* by Jennifer Anne Grosser, who resides in Worcester, MA. *Trees in the Pavement* focuses on Zari, a Kosovo refugee living in London. "War, peace, faith, nationality — everything is changing in Zari's life."

Mark your calendars and join us; all are welcome!

YARD SALE to be held JUNE 17TH



Please save the date. We will be needing your help for a short time on Friday the 16th at 6pm and again on Saturday the 17th at 1:30 to carry

tables out and back into the church. Spaces will be available to rent for only \$15.00 (\$20 for non-Church members). If you have questions, or to rent a space, call me, Cindy Dube, at 508-832-6646.

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