

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

As I write this, the Patriots have just won the AFC Championship. Tom Brady is on his way to his 9th Super Bowl. That sounds like a lot...but I think I can make it sound even more astounding. Tom Brady has been to the Super Bowl more years than not, 9 Super Bowls to 8 non Super Bowl years. Tom Brady has played in more Super Bowls (9) than away playoff games (6).

The Patriots run under Brady and Belichick is unprecedented in NFL football. Done at a time which was designed for parity. The closest runs I can think of are the Yankees that went to the World Series 10 times from 1947-1962 or the Boston Celtics that won 11 of 13 NBA Championships.

In other words, we are witnessing a historic run of winning. This is a team that is in the conversation for the greatest of all time in any sport. Add to the conversation the Bruins winning the Stanley Cup, the Celtics going to two NBA finals and winning one, and the Red Sox winning 4 World Series. Can any city claim a better run of championships? Ever? The 2000's and 2010's are a great time to be a New England and Boston Sports fan!

So how do you feel about that? Are you enjoying the run? Are you worried about it being over? I know for the last few years I have

thought, "This is the last year. Surely the great run is over." Time and again I am wrong. They keep being excellent.

I have seen how a silly game (that generates \$9 billion plus) and the success or failure of a team affects people.

In my youth New England was haunted. Other than the Celtics, all other teams were burdened with curses or simple incompetence and at times both. Even the Celtics fell from contention for more than a decade. Things looked grim. Things felt grim. The call of "we'll get them next year" rang hollow. It was whistling past the graveyard. Our teams gave us little hope of success so stoicism was the rule of the day. There was nothing to get excited about.

Now with all the winning, New England seems a cheerier, more hopeful place. Do you feel like that?

I hope you have a wonderful Super Bowl with lots of people and a lot of food and fun. We know one thing . . . the Pats always play an exciting Super Bowl.

Go Pats!!

God Bless,
Pastor Brian

We will be looking to do our **Worship Planning Meeting on Sunday, February 17**. At this meeting we will 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, and Jean, **representatives from the BOCE, Deacons and Music Committee are expected to attend.**

SERMON TITLES

- 2/3 "God Does Not Take No as an Answer"
- 2/10 "Now I Remind You"
- 2/17 "Blessed"
- 2/24 Guest Preacher - The Rev. Sally Norris, Minister & President of WAMS (Worcester Area Mission Society)

BELL CHOIR REHEARSALS

The Bell Choir will resume rehearsals starting on Sunday afternoon, February 3rd, at 2:30. Anyone interested in the bells is welcome to join with us at one of our rehearsals.

The Music Committee is forming an Organist/Choir Director Search Committee. If you're interested in helping on this committee, please see a Music Committee member - Pat Bukoski, Herb Mower, Lori Stockhaus, and Cindy Ryan.



Happy 96th Birthday to Maybelle Stone who will celebrate her special day on Feb. 14th!

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH'S SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATIONS

Scholarship applications are now available on the table in Fellowship Hall. 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, of course, we have several unrestricted scholarships as well. Please complete the application form and return it to the Memorial/Scholarship Committee by April 15th.

Here We Grow Preschool



We made it through the first month of a new year; I hope the next month isn't as cold as the last one.

Here We Grow will once again be conducting a "Calendar Giveaway" this year. The sale part of this fundraiser will run the month of February. The give-away part will be done each day in March. If you would like to purchase a calendar they are \$10.00 each and have some wonderful prizes, each with at least a \$20.00 or more value. Stop into the **Here We Grow** office or see Denise to purchase a calendar. Thank you in advance for your support. All monies earned go towards field trips, special programs, equipment for the classrooms, and enrichment classes offered to the children (move & groove, music, "Reptile Man" and "Love Bug Hollow Puppets").

We have started enrollment for next year, and our four-year-old classes are filling up. Our Open House will be on March 5th, from 9:00-11:00. We still have openings in most sessions. If you know of a friend, neighbor, or relative who is looking for a preschool, please send them our way.

When thinking about whether to send your child to preschool for the first time, keep in mind what you are hoping to get out of the experience. We start accepting children when they are 2 years, nine months and for them our focus is all about social/emotional growth, which means getting along in a group, taking direction from adults other than Mom and Dad, and learning to share. For children getting ready for kindergarten we are focusing on more academic skills, learning about letters and numbers, printing their names, while still providing social skills. We are also fortunate to be able to offer a class for young 4's. This class is designed for those children who may have already done a year of preschool and need an extra year because they do not make the kindergarten cutoff in their town. For more information about any of our classes please feel free to stop in the office or call 508-832-8184.

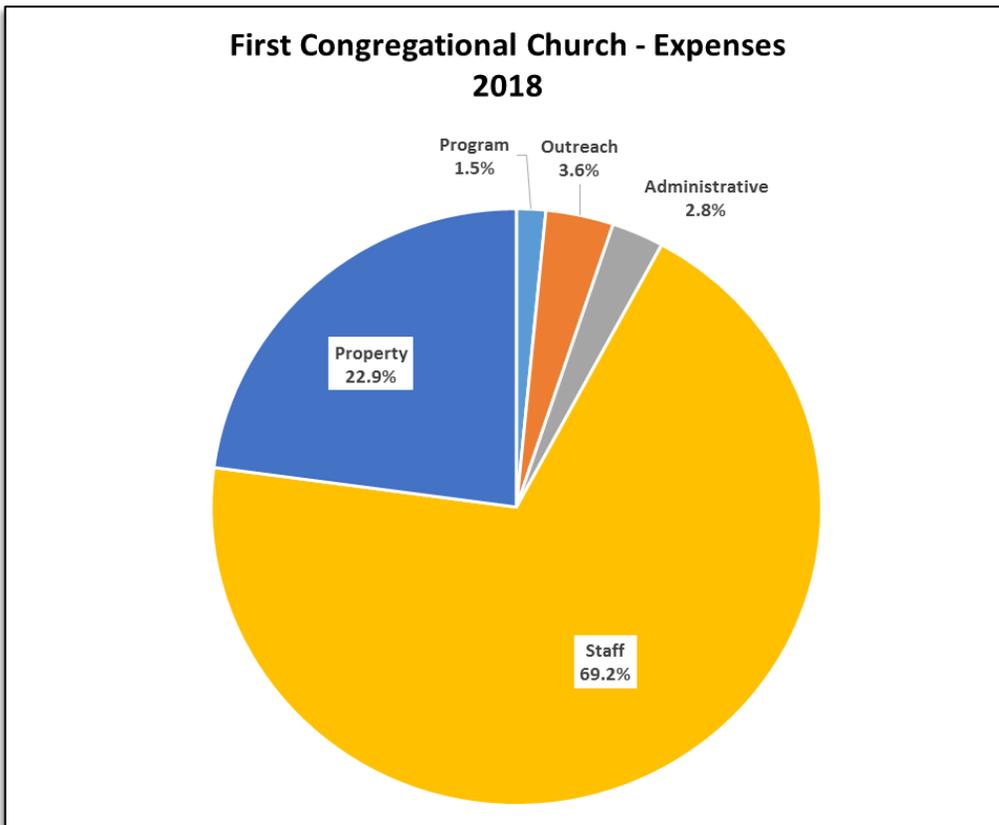
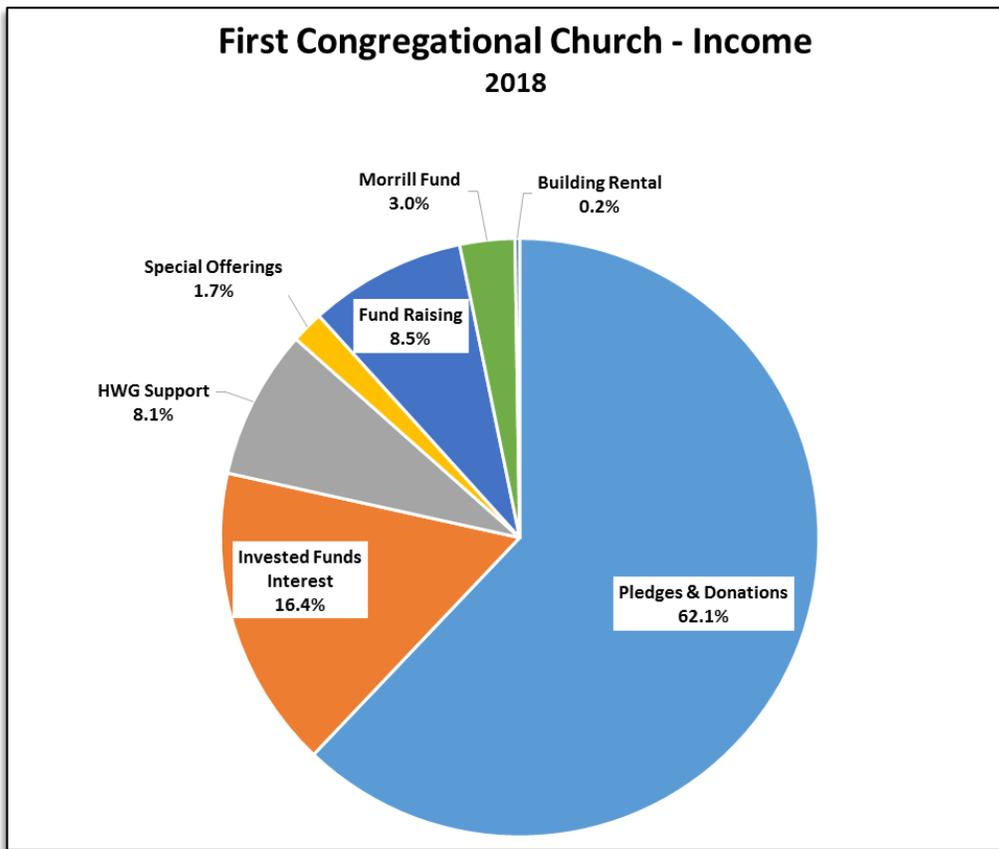
The school will be closed for winter break from February 18-22. We hope you all have a warm and healthy month.

Cristi Corey, Director, **Here We Grow** Preschool

We join with the Stockhaus Family in welcoming the newest addition to their family. Caleb Robert James Armstrong, son of Tori Stockhaus and Keith Armstrong, made his appearance on January 4th weighing in at 7lbs, and 19.5 in. long. Proud grandparents are Lori-Ann and Nick Stockhaus! Congratulations to all!



Our thanks to Nick Stockhaus, Treasurer, for providing us with this 2018 financial “snapshot.”





Please keep the following families in your thoughts and prayers.

Ernest L. Johnson Sr., 88, of East Dennis and Auburn, MA, passed away suddenly on January 8, 2019, surrounded by his loving family. He was born in Worcester, MA, to Alfred and Alice (Gullberg) Johnson, and was predeceased by his seven older siblings.

Ernie and his wife, Jeanne (Ritchie) Johnson married in 1952. Ernie served as a U.S. Army sergeant with the Fifth Engineering Battalion in Germany, during the Korean War. Following his service, he ran Johnson Brothers Construction with his partner and brother, Clifford. Ernie was a real estate entrepreneur in Auburn for many years, until his passing.

At the age of 67, he became an avid cyclist, and went on to complete the Pan Mass Challenge seven times. He was also a kayaker. He greatly enjoyed early morning walks with his friends. Inspired by his service, he remained a military enthusiast hosting several army reunions on Cape Cod and gathering a collection of vintage army vehicles. He enjoyed gardening often sharing the fruits and vegetables of his labor with his family and friends. He was a passionate philanthropist, who gave much and volunteered his time to such causes as Shriner’s Hospital for Children, the Wounded Warrior Project, Homes for Our Troops, and Homeless Veterans of Worcester. He was a 32nd Degree Mason.

Ernie is survived by his wife, Jeanne; his oldest son, Scott and his wife, Deborah; his son, Ernie Jr. and his wife, Aileen; his daughter, Laurie Lanciault and her husband, Jim; and his daughter, Lynda Gemme and her husband, Paul. He is also survived by nine grandchildren and four great- grandchildren, as well as several nieces and nephews.

A memorial service was held on Saturday, January 19, at Cape Cod Covenant Church in Brewster.

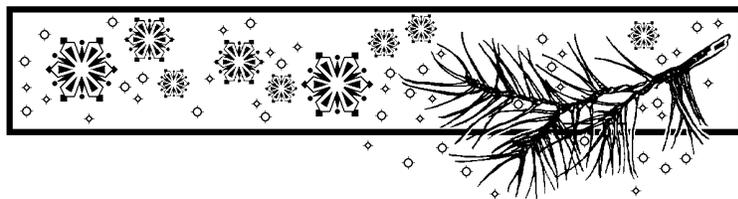
Charlotte E. (Russell) Stevens, 94, longtime Auburn resident died Thursday, December 20, 2018 in the Lutheran Rehabilitation Center in Worcester after an illness.

Charlotte was born at the family home in Auburn, MA, daughter of the late Charles Russell and Reina (Mitchell) Russell. She graduated from Auburn High School in 1942.

Charlotte had been a Manager in the Policy Rating Department at the Worcester Insurance Company for 15 years before she retired in 1990. In her retirement years, she was a homebody and enjoyed reading, crossword puzzles and interlocking puzzles, knitting, and cross stitch. She loved music and enjoyed singing. She was a former member of the choir and the women’s group at the First Congregational Church in Auburn.

Her beloved husband of 70 years, Howard A. Stevens died in 2016. She leaves her loving children, Robert Stevens and his wife Jean, Mark Stevens, Cynthia Gallant and her husband Stephen and Nancy Henderson and her husband Clyde; four grandchildren and nine great-grandchildren and several nieces and nephews. Besides her husband she was predeceased by a son, Gary P. Stevens, and daughter-in-law, Kathleen Stevens.

A service was held on Friday, January 4, 2019, at Britton-Wallace Funeral Home. Burial followed in Hillside Cemetery, Auburn.



During times of inclement weather, we have set up an account with WBZ-TV Channel 4 enabling us to report Church service cancellations. However, we’ve been told that when there are numerous cancellations, as a small organization, our cancellation may only appear on their website cbsboston.com. Also, keep in mind that 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, exercising caution when deciding whether to venture out to service during stormy weather.

FROM THE DIRECTOR OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Happy Valentine's Day to all of you! As we begin this month of expressing our love, let us remember the NEVER ending love we ALL receive every moment from our Father in heaven.

This month will be our annual trek to Monadnock Bible Ministries. On February 8-10 Fred Comeau, Shannon Hartmann, 11 teens and I will brave the cold to have a weekend full of devotions, prayers, music, discussions and a lot of food and fun. Please say a quick prayer that all the kids' hearts are open to the message that will be delivered.

I can't believe I just ordered the last group of curriculum for this year! The year is flying by. Please find some time to come down and see all the work that the kids are doing. You will be amazed how much they know about finding passages in the Bible and the ten commandments. Even the preschool class can recite the Lord's Prayer.

During the Annual Meeting the Sunday school classes made Valentines for Pastor Brian and Deb P. to distribute to our shut-ins and those in the hospital or nursing homes.

Anyone is welcome to visit or help out with Sunday School; please see Katie Sharr or me if you are interested.



February is American Heart Month, International Prenatal Infection Prevention Plan Month, Low Vision Awareness Month, National Children's Dental Health Month, and Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month.

February 1 is Go Red For Women

February 4 is World Cancer Day

February 7-14 is Congenital Heart Defect Awareness Week

February 14 is National Donor Day

February 22 is National Heart Valve Disease Awareness Day

I have received many positive remarks and notes from the people who have received cards that we sent. I have many cards and I am glad to be doing this. I appreciate hearing about people that we can send a card to and let them know that we're thinking of them.

I am looking for health fairs to attend to update the services that are offered in our area in case someone needs assistance. I will update the table in Fellowship Hall.

Stay warm and healthy during these cold months. Most of all - be safe. God Bless!

Debbie Pranaitis, Parish Nurse
508-612-4521

Join us on February 10th as we celebrate **BOY SCOUT SUNDAY** during our 10 a.m. service.



COFFEE HOUR HOSTS	
2/3	Stewardship Committee
2/10, 2/17	Outreach Committee
2/24, 3/3	Personnel Committee
3/10	Board of Deacons

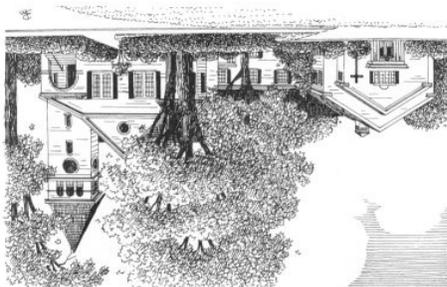
POTLUCK SUPPER & MOVIE DISCUSSION

Join us on Tuesday, February 19th, for a potluck supper beginning at 5:30 p.m. We will be viewing and discussing the movie *The Red Tent*. *The Red Tent* is a tale that takes place during Old Testament times as told through the eyes of Dinah, the daughter of Leah and Jacob.

February 2019						
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24	25	26	27	28		

OR CURRENT RESIDENT

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