

January
2016

Happy New
Year!

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

Welcome to Two Thousand Sixteen, 2016. A year of a presidential election. Doesn't it seem like we have already been listening to people run for president for years? The saddest thing about campaigns is the TV commercials; no other industry attacks a competitor the way politicians do. It seems half of all ads have to tear an opponent down. Who would drink soda if Coke and Pepsi said the other's drink is filled with poison? The politicians, I believe, are not that different from each other; that is why the attacks need to be extreme. They are extreme because the differences aren't that large. So due to that, we will yet again hear leaders of our country call other leaders of our country everything except a child of God.

All sorts of insults will be thrown around. Everything a candidate ever did will be gone over with a fine-toothed comb. In the end we will have to pick one of these imperfect people to be our new president. We will also vote for the US Senate, Congress, plus the State Legislature. How important will this election be? The TV commentators will call it historic. Will it be more important for us than the health of our loved ones? I doubt it.

The greater world does not affect us as much as the things close to us. Our jobs, our loved ones, our friends, those are the things that will be most important to us. The world can often be held at bay. No matter what the TV makes us think, we are unlikely to be hurt in a terrorist attack, or in a natural disaster.

Television news wants us to fear the things it covers. That is what TV news sells — is fear. When we aren't afraid, TV news loses ratings. But there is little we truly need to fear. There is not much that fear will help with. It used to be fear gave us strength to fight or outrun the saber tooth tiger trying to eat us. Fear is not likely to save us from, “Next at 11, is your carpet trying to kill you!?” Or whatever other nonsense the news is fearmongering this week.

Hear the words of 1 John:

*There is no **fear** in love, but perfect love casts out **fear**. For **fear** has to do with punishment, and he who **fears** is not perfected in love.*

God bless you,
Pastor Brian



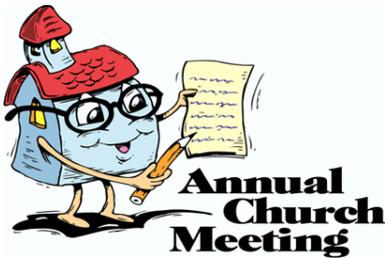
SERMON TITLES

- 1/3 “Epiphany, Can You See?”
- 1/10 “What’s up, God?” - Cliff to preach
- 1/17 “One Spirit, Many Gifts”
- 1/24 “What Was Forgotten”
- 1/31 “Jeremiah’s Enemy Is His Own People”

Once again it has been a wonderful year as your pastor. I want to thank you for all of your kind words and deeds and especially the generous Christmas gift.

*Thank you,
Pastor Brian*

Pastor Brian will be on vacation from January 4th through January 11th. Please pray for a well-deserved time of rest and relaxation.



Important Notice:

The Annual Meeting will be held here on **Saturday, January 23rd, at 2 p.m.** (All committee/board end-of-year reports are NOW due.) The **Installation of Officers and Committees** will be during worship on **January 24th.** The **All Committee Meeting** will be on **Monday, January 25th, at 7 p.m.**

2016 Offering Envelopes

Please pick up your 2016 offering envelopes located at the church in the back of the Sanctuary. If you can't find your envelopes, it means you did not make a pledge or didn't indicate that you wanted envelopes. Please see Lori or Nick Stockhaus with any questions.

Coffee Hour Hosts:

1/3, 10 Trustees (2015 members)

1/17, 24 Music Committee (2015)

Please note: a new coffee hour schedule will be distributed at the All Committee Meeting on Monday, January 25th at 7 p.m.



Happy Birthday to:

Lillian McPherson ~ 1/19/96

Cassandra Stockhaus ~ 1/23/99

We would like to acknowledge your special occasion in the *Tidings* — just complete a birthday/anniversary form located on the table in Fellowship Hall or call 508-832-2845 to have a form mailed to you.



We are celebrating with the following members who were recently blessed with new additions to their families.

Welcome, Jackson Philip Leszau, the son of Lauren and Danny, born on December 1st weighing in at 8 lbs., 13 oz. and 21 $\frac{1}{4}$ inches long. Proud grandparents are Lorna White, grandmother, and great-grandparents, Bob and Carole Murray.

Sylvia Elizabeth Scala also arrived on December 1st, born to Gretchen and Jay and weighing 7 lbs., 2 oz. and 19 inches long. Sylvia was welcomed by big sisters, Carrina and Camrynn. Proud grandma is Jen Temple and the late Don Temple is Sylvia's granddad. Great-grandparents are Marion Woodcock and the late Don Woodcock.

On December 7th Calvin Styles Campbell made his appearance weighing 7 lbs., 10 oz. and 20 inches long. Congratulations to parents, Seth and Carolyn Campbell, and proud grandparents, Sue and Stu Campbell.

Congratulations to the Tentor Family on the birth of identical twins, Elizabeth Louise and Emma Jean, born December 16th to Matt and Katrina Lallier. Elizabeth was 5 lbs., 12 oz. and 18 $\frac{1}{4}$ inches and Emma was 6 lbs., 13 oz. and 19 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches at birth. Proud grandparents are Pam and Marty Tentor.

The Deacons would like to remind you about the Pearl Morrill Trust fund. This trust was set up by Pearl B. Morrill for the benefit of the elderly members of the First Congregational Church of Auburn. The Trust has been active for almost a year now and has helped several members of the Church with meeting a variety of financial needs.

Some of the needs this trust has been able to provide assistance for in the past year include funeral expenses, medical and electricity/heat as well as funding our parish nurse who assists the elderly in various capacities such as driving them to and from doctor appointments, visiting shut-ins and those in nursing homes/care facilities and providing literature and information important to the needs and care of our elders.

One correction to last month's *Tiding's* article regarding the distribution to the Trust is that the final tally was closer to \$500,000 rather than the \$625,000 reported. This is still quite an expansive figure and we encourage anyone who is aware of any needs of our elder population to submit a request to Pastor Brian or any of the deacons. Request forms can be found in the church office.

Some things to consider 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 (don't 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.

If you have any questions regarding the operation of the Trust, please feel free to contact Pastor Brian, one of the Deacons, or one of the Prudential Committee members.

For the Board of Deacons
Michele Schillinger

POTLUCK SUPPERS & MOVIE/BOOK DISCUSSION TIME

Our monthly potluck supper get-togethers continue. The potlucks begin at 5:30 p.m. on movie nights with the movie viewing during dinner, and discussion to follow at its conclusion. On book discussion nights, the potluck begins at 6:00 p.m. with the book discussion beginning at approximately 6:30-6:45 p.m. You do NOT have to read the book, if you just want to come for food and fellowship, please do!



On Tuesday, January 19th, at 6 p.m. we will be discussing the book, *Surprised by Joy: the Shape of My Early Life* by C.S. Lewis. This book is not an autobiography. It is not a confession. It is, however, certainly one of the most beautiful and insightful accounts of a person coming to faith. Here, C.S. Lewis takes us from his childhood in Belfast through the loss of his mother, to boarding school and a youthful atheism in England, to the trenches of World War I, and then to Oxford, where he studied, read, and, ultimately, reasoned his way back to God. The book may be obtained at the following site:

<http://www.amazon.com/Surprised-Joy-Shape-Early-Life/dp/0156870118>

On February 16th at 5:30 p.m. we'll view the movie, *Seven Deadly Words*. Two student filmmakers come to Egypt Valley Community Church to complete a documentary on a small congregation adapting to a new pastor. What they don't realize is that they will soon be caught in the middle of a power struggle that will test the faith and push the limits of all parties involved. All are invited to these get-togethers, so mark your calendars and plan to join us!



Happy New Year!! From Here We Grow Preschool

Can you believe it is 2016? The school year seems to be flying by. Our Holiday programs were a great success. The parents and 3-year-olds had nice singalongs in their classroom and our 4-year-olds sang with strong voices on the stage. We finished both with a visit from Santa. Thank you, Pastor Brian, for all your help!

We had unbelievable participation from our parents on both the toy drive and gently used coats, we could not be more appreciative.

We will be getting back into the swing of things and we are looking forward to Valentine's Day in February. Also during the month of February, we will be starting our second fundraiser which is a calendar filled with great prizes. Mrs. Hartmann has been working hard to help make it a success. In March we will have our spring pictures taken.

We are always looking for substitutes and future teachers, please call the school or send us your resume if interested.

Have a great month and Happy New Year!
Gina Basili, Director, **Here We Grow** Preschool

New member classes will begin on January 17th. If you're interested in becoming a church member, join Pastor Brian at a table in Fellowship Hall during coffee hour on January 17th and January 24th. (A 3rd class may be added on January 31st.) These informal classes are 15 to 20 minutes. If interested, please speak with Pastor Brian or a Deacon for more information.

From the Church Secretary

Thank you so very much for the gifts, cards, phone calls, baked goodies, etc. I received as you remembered me this Christmas. Each year, as you continue to be so generous to me, I struggle to put into words my appreciation. May the Lord bless you for being such a blessing to me!

Denise

Christmas Wishes from Children's Home Nepal!





Happy New Year!

January is Cervical Health Awareness Month, National Birth Defects Prevention Month, National Blood Donor Month, and National Glaucoma Awareness Month. January 3-9 is National Folic Acid Awareness Week. I will have information about folic acid on the health table, as well as the above mentioned issues.

The closet has been helpful to many. Items continue to come and go. If you need to borrow something and there isn't one there, ask me because I know some people have some items in their homes that don't fit in the closet.

I hope everyone has a happy, healthy 2016!

Debbie Pranaitis
Parish Nurse
cell: 508-612-4521

Greetings from Worcester Fellowship to all of our supporting churches! I am writing to let you know that we are starting a "gently used" backpack drive running through the end of January and we are reaching out to local churches to see if you might assist us in this mission.

We have received a donation to obtain supplies to be put into backpacks that will be given to both recently released prison inmates as well as the homeless community of Worcester, and we now are in need of the backpacks! If you would care to participate in this outreach mission, we would be happy to come and pick up any of these that you gather (just email me, office@worcesterfellowship.org, and we can arrange a pickup).

Our thanks for your continued support.

Blessings and peace of heart,
Susan Pellerin, Administrative Director

NOTE OUR NEW ADDRESS: Post Office Box 307, Marlborough, MA 01752

Tidings 2016 Subscription Renewal Form

In an effort to offset the costs 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!

Please call the Church office with any questions, 508-832-2845.



Susan B. Klaucke passed away peacefully at home on Monday, Dec. 14, 2015 surrounded by her family. She is survived by her husband, Ronald, and two sons, Dr. Christian Klaucke, and Dr. Jonathan Klaucke, and his wife, Dr. Jillian Verby Klaucke, and their daughter, Greta. Susan also leaves behind her parents, Marcel and Gloria (Lavallee) Beaugard, and sisters Vivian Cardinal, Pauline Deluca, Anne Briere, and Diane St. Onge, as well as brothers, Roger and Robert Beaugard. Additionally, she is survived by 10 nieces and nephews and their eight young children. Susan grew up in North Grosvenor Dale, CT and graduated from Tourtellotte High School before becoming a dental hygienist through Quinsigamond Community College. She enthusiastically continued this profession before retiring at age 61 due to the effects of Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis. Susan loved being a mother and grandmother, cycling on Cape Cod and the Islands, having annual quilting weekends with her sisters and mother, skiing with her sons and husband, and gardening. Susan also sang in our church choir for over 30 years and was a member on church boards and committees. She was proud to participate in clinical research trials for ALS and has donated her body to UMass Medical School. A memorial service was held on December 19th here at the church. Please keep Ron and family in your prayers.

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

The Star Island Corporation is currently accepting applications for their summer staff. If you are not already familiar with Star Island, they run a seasonal religious and educational conference center off the New Hampshire coast and hire approximately 100 college-aged people to work from mid-June to mid-September. Since their roots are linked to the UCC, working on Star offers a unique employment opportunity for UCC young adults (age 18 and older) in a beautiful location. The application deadline is **January 22**. For more information about working on Star Island, please visit their website (<http://starisland.org/working/seasonal/>) or call Kate Brady at (603) 430-6272 with any questions.

FROM THE DIRECTOR OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Happy New Year! I pray you all had a Christmas filled with happiness and love. If you were fortunate enough to have joined us for the Christmas Eve service I am sure you left with a smile on your face and a warm feeling in your heart. Everyone did a great job!

I am again in need of assistance in cradle roll. Randy Bohn has stepped down after 2 years of missing EVERY Sunday so that parents of babies and toddlers could worship. Thank you, Randy, for your dedication. Please consider being added to the rotation schedule to assist us with this very special ministry. As those of you who have children know, how wonderful an hour can be in helping us “recharge.” I have teens very willing and able to assist, but due to their age and church policies, I need an adult in the room. Please speak to me if you are interested.

As of this writing, I do not have the Cookie Walk totals but I would still like to thank everyone who helped to bake and those who bought tins full of delicious cookies.

We will be at Camp Berea from Friday, January 8 - January 10. Please keep us in your prayers as we grow both personally and as a group with God as our guide. This always proves to be a very enlightening weekend for the teens as well as the adults. I want to thank Randy and Jen Bohn for agreeing to chaperone along with me. Thank you also to Laurie and everyone who will hold down the fort while we are away. **PLEASE NOTE:** There will be a mandatory Camp Berea meeting after worship on Jan. 3rd downstairs in the Sunday school wing. **All paperwork will need to be completed and turned in at that time.** If possible I would like a parent there also to hear all the final details.

I pray that 2016 brings you all a year full of joy, laughter and good health.

Jean McPherson, Director of Religious Education

A Smile Is Worth a Thousand Words



Your Outreach Dollars at Work! — In November the Outreach Committee (along with Pastor Brian) set out to pick up 25 new coats at the Burlington Coat Factory for distribution to children in need at Worcester's Columbus Park School. (Kudos to Burlington for giving us a generous 25% discount upon hearing about our mission that day.) We were forwarded several pictures of the children trying on their new coats, eventually deciding to print these two, as the smiles on their faces say it all! (We're told the little girl on the left kept her new coat on all day!)



Dear Friends,

I wish to thank you for the wonderful Christmas basket. It was filled with delicious baked goods, fruit, beverages, jam, soup, etc., note cards and all things we enjoy. Along with all that, was a wonderful visit from Deb. It brings back memories of everyone at church and all the fun of working on committees. Merry Christmas, everyone.

Love, Lorain (Johnson)

I would like to thank everyone for the beautiful gift basket. Ray and I enjoyed it. Thank you for thinking of us.

Sincerely, Alice and Ray (Litman)

As we receive them, additional thank-you notes in response to the Deacons' Christmas baskets will be posted on the bulletin board in Fellowship Hall. Many thanks to the Deacons and to those who helped assemble the baskets and/or contributed food donations.



Community Supper

Saturday, January 16th, at 5 p.m.

Please join us for a delicious roast beef supper.

Adults \$10 Children 10 & under—free

Servers are the 2015 Board of Deacons

(Volunteers are always needed and appreciated!)

We hope to see you there!

TIDINGS is a monthly publication of

**First Congregational Church,
United Church of Christ
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

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doing Christ's work in the world.*

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