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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

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## The Future and the Good Old Days

Did you ever think you would live in 2018? I didn't. Growing up I was sure the USA and USSR would launch a nuclear war that would end the world. 2018 was a science fiction future with flying cars and commuter travel to the stars. Still no flying cars, but they say we will soon have robot chauffeurs. Plus, in our smart phones we have something very close to a *Star Trek* communicator.

So, today is the future. It is also the good old days. For the little boys and girls in Here We Grow and cradle roll, 2018 will be the time they look back to when life was so simple. They will remember Grammy and Grampy and just how wonderful it was when they were little.

That is the nature of time. It changes as we age. When we are little, we forget or do not understand the scary things going on. I remember being really upset that *Gilligan's Island* was not on TV; President Nixon was resigning that day. I remember telling my mom that I saw a gorilla wearing a hat. It was the Palestinian Guerrillas who had taken hostages at the Munich Olympics.

Those big events made no sense to me at 4 or 6. I was worried about if lunch would include something junky. I worried about having to take a nap like a baby when I was really a big boy. The greater world was not my problem.

Sometimes I wish that was still true. At the moment, the news has me worried about the missiles in North Korea and fires in California. Plus, there are other stories they want me to worry about, but have failed to actually spark my interest.

Will any of these so called news stories actually change my life? Or am I worried for nothing? At the moment I know quite a lot about the so called British royal family. What possible impact will a British baby and wedding have on my life?

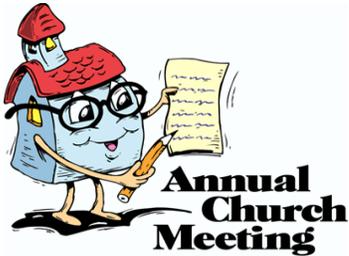
As I said last year after the election, the happenings in our family will determine our happiness much more than world events. Babies and diagnoses in our family will be much more important than world events.

We live in the future. We are making the lovely good old days for a new generation. I pray we all do a good job.

God bless you,  
Pastor Brian

### **SERMON TITLES:**

- |                     |  |
|---------------------|--|
| 1/7 "Three Kings"   | 1/14 Rev. Karen Haringa to preach (while Pastor Brian is away) |
| 1/21 "Even Nineveh" | 1/28 "We Know We All Have Knowledge"                           |



### Important Notice

Weather permitting: **The Annual Meeting** will be held here on **Saturday, January 20th, at 2 p.m.** (All committee/board end-of-year reports are **NOW** due.) **The Installation of Officers and Board Members** will be during worship on **January 21st.** **The All Committee Meeting** (the first 2018 meeting of all committees and boards) will be on **Monday, January 22nd, at 7 p.m.**

#### **2018 Offering Envelopes**

Please pick up your 2018 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.

#### **2017 Pledges**

Please note that donations received in the office before Jan 1<sup>st</sup> will show up on your 2017 donation statement. In addition to this, any donations received by mail after Jan 1<sup>st</sup> may be included on your donation statement if the letter is postmarked on or before December 31<sup>st</sup>. Any donations postmarked after December 31<sup>st</sup> will appear on your 2018 donation statement. 2017 donation statements will be available starting January 20<sup>th</sup>. Thank you!

#### **POTLUCK SUPPERS**

Join us for our monthly potluck suppers beginning at 5:30 on movie nights and 6:00 on book discussion nights.

On Tuesday, January 16th, at 6 p.m. we will be discussing the novel *The Scarlet Letter* by Nathaniel Hawthorne.

On February 20th at 5:30 p.m. we'll view the movie, *War Room*. "With great jobs, a beautiful daughter and a dream house, the Jordans seem to have it all. Appearances can be deceiving, however, as husband Tony flirts with temptation and wife Elizabeth becomes increasingly bitter, crumbling under the strain of a failing marriage. Their lives take an unexpected turn for the better when Elizabeth meets her newest client, Miss Clara, who encourages the couple to find happiness through prayer."

#### **Bell Choir Seeking a Drummer**

For an upcoming anthem based on a Native American Melody, the piece would be greatly enhanced if we had someone with a soft drum that could accompany us. Projected performance date would be sometime between mid-February and mid-March. Rehearsals are Sunday afternoons at 2:30. Drummer probably only needed at 2 or 3 rehearsals. No age restrictions. If interested or you want more details, contact Herb Mower at [mower@alum.mit.edu](mailto:mower@alum.mit.edu) or 508-434-2864.

#### **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.

#### **Coffee Hour Hosts:**

1/7 Prudential Committee    1/14 Music Committee  
1/21 Board of Deacons

Please note: a new coffee hour schedule will be distributed at the All Committee Meeting on Monday, January 23rd.

#### **Playground Toy Drive for Columbus Park Elementary School through January 7th**

There is a collection box in Fellowship Hall for playground toys for Columbus Park School in Worcester. The children are in need of the basics: basketballs, soccer balls, jump ropes, wiffle balls and bats, sidewalk chalk, etc. Please help us bless these children with basic playground equipment. We will be collecting through 1-7-18.

**Thank you.**

It has been a joyous holiday season for the Nominating Committee. Thank you, nominees, who have come forward for new terms. There are now only 5 nominees needed for submission at the Annual Meeting.

**MUSIC: 2 open vacancies 1 (2 yr.) and 1 (1 yr.)** This board is responsible for the policy concerning the formation of choirs and other musical groups; as well as, maintenance of all musical instruments owned by the Church.

**LIBRARY: (1 new vacancy)** Assistance is needed to support the 2 current library reps with Church's adult and children's libraries including upgrading cataloging and shelving.

**DEACON: 2 (3 yr.) open vacancies** This board assists the Minister with sacraments of the Church for all services and assists the Minister as requested per By-Laws; as well as, provide for the supply of pulpit coverage during the Minister's absence.

A full description of the above information can be found in our FCC Constitution and By-Laws. Please speak to one of us, as your Nominating Reps., or complete one of the slips found in Fellowship Hall. Our contact information is:

Sue MacPhee: — (508) 832-9347, Gmail: [Susiemac2002@gmail.com](mailto:Susiemac2002@gmail.com)

Judi Taft — (508) 752-2023, email: [jtaft01527@aol.com](mailto:jtaft01527@aol.com)

Melynn Guilford: — (508) 904-2921, email: [melyng3@yahoo.com](mailto:melyng3@yahoo.com)

*Thank You for your Christmas gift. This year has been a wonderful time as your Pastor; hopefully, it will continue for many more. God bless —*

*Pastor Brian*

Please pray for Pastor Brian while he's on vacation 1/8 - 1/15.



## **Happy New Year!**

January is National Cervical Health Awareness Month, National Birth Defects Awareness Month, National Blood Donor Month, and National Glaucoma Awareness Month.

January 7th - 13th is Folic Awareness Week

January 18th- 24th is Healthy Weight Week

A reminder to all about the health table in Fellowship Hall. I go to health fairs throughout the year to gather new information. Please help yourself. There are pill set ups that I get, as well as a few other free items. You can always get them for a "friend." I use a pill set up, especially working the night shift and an irregular schedule; I need a set up! Also, please remember the closet with walkers, wheelchairs, tub seats, etc. The items come and go; so if you need something, it could be there one day and gone the next. If you know you or someone will need something following a surgery, take it while it's there.

God Bless!

Debbie Pranaitis, Parish Nurse  
Cell #: 508-612-4521

January *Tidings* from Here We Grow Preschool

January has arrived with all the cold. We hope you all had a wonderful and relaxing holiday. We are still bundling up to go outside when possible, fresh air is so good for the children and teachers. If the weather is too cold outside, we will be having our gross motor time in the vestry. We feel so blessed to have this space available to us.

Our 3-year-olds had their Christmas programs on Dec. 21<sup>st</sup> with a sing-a-long in the classrooms with family and friends. The 4-year-olds had their concerts in the morning and afternoon on Dec 21 and 22. A great time was had by all, and parents were very generous with the goodies for our 4-year-old parties. A big thank you goes out to Pastor Brian for helping us arrange a "special visitor" for the children.

We collected toys in conjunction with the Auburn Police Department's "Secret Santa" program. Family support was great; we filled our large box multiple times and were able to help make the holiday special for some Auburn families.

Enrollment forms for next year have gone out in-house and we are already filling spots. We will continue in-house enrollment until the end of January and then we will open it up to new parents and children. If you know of anyone looking for a preschool, we would be happy to hear from them. **Open House will take place March 6, 2018.**

In February families will be selling tickets for our calendar raffle fundraiser. Beginning March 1<sup>st</sup>, we will be picking a winner every day for 31 days. If you would like a chance at winning some great prizes, please speak with a parent or staff member. Thanks to all.

We wish everyone a Happy New Year.

Here We Grow Staff

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**ATTENTION:** We are in need of someone (or a group) to volunteer to run the February supper scheduled for February 17, 2018. If no one volunteers to come forward, we will be forced to cancel the supper. If interested in helping out by preparing the supper, please contact Stan MacPhee. Did you know? Each year the church suppers raise over \$2,600 for the church's general fund!

**Tidings 2018  
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.

*Thank You!*

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

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

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

Please keep the following families in your prayers.

**Dameon R. Esposito**, 46, of Paxton passed away Monday, November 27, in UMass Medical Center. He leaves his three children, Vincent P. Esposito, Victoria L. Esposito and Varissa L. Esposito; his mother, Jane L. (Milley) Standring; his nana, Lillian Milley; his heart, Nicole A. Bateman and her son, Christian J. Benoit with whom he lived; his former wife, Michelle L. Esposito; his sister, Elizabeth L. and her husband, Jeffrey S. Allain; a nephew, Connor; his niece and godchild, Paris; his cousin and best friend, Tony and his wife, Jennifer; several aunts, uncles and cousins. He was born in San Diego, CA son of the late, Paul F. Standring and graduated from Bay Path High School.

Dameon was a Sergeant at the Worcester County Sheriff Department for 20 years, retiring in 2014. He also worked alongside his uncle, John Milley, in various capacities since the age of 14 at the Knights of Columbus, Alhambra Council #88, where he was a longtime member and served as a former officer.

Dameon was a wonderful father and son and a friend to all who knew him. He was known for his great sense of humor, a sarcastic wit and a great philosopher to many. He loved visiting East Sandwich in the summer. His friends will miss the games of corn hole, hanging out and watching sports.

A funeral service celebrating Dameon's Life was held Saturday, December 2, at our Church. Burial followed in Hillside Cemetery, Auburn.

**Rafael "Morris" Gonzalez**, 49, of Auburn, formerly of Southbridge, died Tuesday, November 28, 2017. He was born in the Bronx, New York, son of the late Antonio Gonzalez, Sr.

He is survived by his best friend of 12 years and wife of a year and half, Vickie (Mahlert) Gonzalez; his children, Mia and Isabella Gonzalez, Dakota Vazquez and Anastasia Gonzalez; his mother, Maria (Vazquez) Arce; his siblings, Sonia Chiarella, Luis Gonzalez, Wanda Gonzalez, Antonio Gonzalez, Jr, Luz Ovalles and Maria Carattini.

A funeral service was held on Saturday, December 16, 2017 at Britton-Wallace Funeral Home in Auburn followed by inurnment in Hillside Cemetery, Auburn.

**Diane Wentworth Boyne Howell**, 83, of Niskayuna, NY, came to eternal rest on December 25th at her home surrounded by her loving family. Born in Albany, NY, on July 10, 1934, she was the daughter of Harold and Anne Boyne and sister to Marcia Boyne. She attended Saint Agnes School in Albany then Russell Sage College in Troy where she graduated in 1955 with a Bachelor's Degree in Education. Upon graduation from Sage, she began a short career as a teacher for the Albany Public School system before starting her family.

In the same year she graduated from college, she married David Wright Howell with whom she recently celebrated their 62nd wedding anniversary. Shortly after their marriage, they moved to Niskayuna to raise their family residing in the same home for 55 years.

She and her family are members of the First Presbyterian Church in Schenectady where their four children and a number of their grandchildren have been married.

Diane was devoted to her family and bravely fought to witness her last Christmas with them. She graciously hosted large celebrations at her home with family and friends, new and old, and found her greatest joy in the presence of her grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Diane had a kind and loving spirit which was a gift to all who had the pleasure of knowing her.

She is survived by her husband David and their four children, Cynthia Anne Battiste and her husband David, Pamela J. Tentor and her husband R. Martin, Timothy S. Howell and his wife Andrea, and Megan E. Swenson and her husband Scott, as well as ten grandchildren, and seven great-grandchildren. Funeral services were held on Saturday, December 30th, at the First Presbyterian Church in Schenectady. A private burial service will be performed at Albany Rural Cemetery.

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

John 11:25

### FROM THE DIRECTOR OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Happy New Year to all! Wow! Another year has ended and I can't believe it! During this festive, yet hectic, time of year, try to steal away a few minutes with a cup of tea or hot cocoa and reflect on all the trials that God has helped you through this past year, as well as all the blessings you have received.

Sunday School performed "Sing a Song of Christmas," our Christmas pageant this year. I want to thank everyone who participated in this wonderful program, especially Rebecca who selected the script, chose costumes, procured "volunteers" to play a role and directed the pageant.

Parents' Night Out was a HUGE success! We had 18 children ranging in age from 1-11. The YOM teens concluded the night with a Christmas party and Yankee Swap.

Thank you to all who contributed in any way to the annual cookie walk. I do not have totals as of this writing, but I will let you know how we did. I hope you enjoyed your treats with someone special.

YOM is on the move! This month, January 26-28, we will be driving to Monadnock Bible Conference for our Encounter HOPE weekend. The theme this year is: KNOW HOPE.

We will tackle the difficult aspects of life and provide answers to help overcome the stress and anxiety of life that is crippling teens today. The answer: the author of Hope — Jesus Christ.

Here are a few of our activities:

Biblical & Dynamic Teaching	Engaging Worship	Indoor Mini Golf
Extended Group Discussion Times	Speedball Course (paintball)	Tournaments
Indoor Heated Swimming Pool	Group Games & Activities	Snow Tubing

Please be in prayer for everyone attending, both teens and chaperones. This is the first time for many, but we have some seasoned veterans to help show them the ropes. Thank you for all your help throughout the year so we are able to send everyone that would like to attend.

Jean McPherson, Director of Religious Education



The Outreach Committee, on behalf of the church, provided the following new items to the children of Columbus Park Elementary School:

girls' and boys' fleece sweatshirts and pants, boys shirts with matching hats, winter hats, gloves and mittens, slipper socks, boys' and girls' underwear and socks, 6 - \$50 gift cards, 2 American Hero dolls, 2 Barbie dolls and 96 pencils (purchases totaling over \$600). Our thanks to the Outreach Committee for their efforts.

Thank you also to all who donated coats and outerwear to the Goddard School in Worcester. Many thanks to Judy Murphy who organizes this event each year.

### GET YOUR "FROM OUR PUMPKIN PATCH" COOKBOOK HERE!!

Our cookbook contains over 200 recipes! In addition to "Our Favorite Pumpkin Recipes" section, we have Appetizers & Beverages, Soups & Salads, Vegetables & Side Dishes, Main Dishes, Breads & Rolls, Desserts, Cookies & Candy, and "This & That." At \$15 apiece, they will make a great addition to your own kitchen library as well as a wonderful gift for any occasion. Cookbooks are available for purchase during coffee hours, please see Michele Schillinger, or email her at [library@auburnfirstucc.org](mailto:library@auburnfirstucc.org) (with "cookbook" in the subject line) or call 508-259-2239.

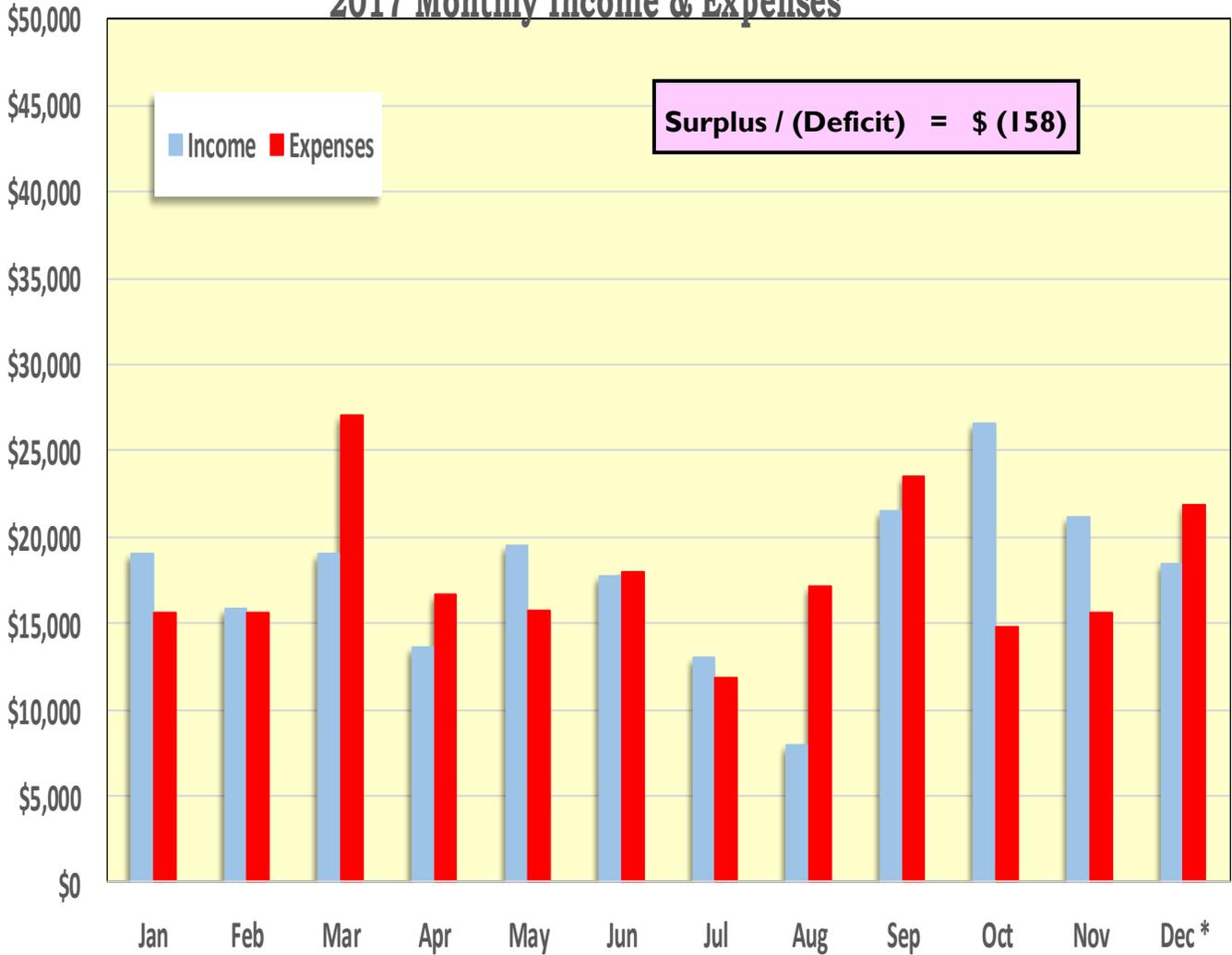
### From the Church Secretary

**Thank you so very much** for all the thoughtful ways you remembered me this Christmas. Cards, goodies, gifts, phone calls all served to brighten my holiday and further endear you to me. Once again, you have been extremely generous and a simple "thank you" seems so inadequate in expressing my heartfelt appreciation for all of you.

May the Lord richly bless you for your thoughtfulness.

Denise

### First Congregational Church 2017 Monthly Income & Expenses



Surplus / (Deficit) = \$ (158)

\* Partial Month

New Bibles have been selected to replace the old ones. An order for 192 pew Bibles (New International Version) has arrived. The purchase price is \$12 each.

Please consider purchasing one or more in honor of and/or memory of loved ones.

As we did previously with our new hymnals, dedications are in the process of being printed onto labels and affixed to the inside front cover. Please complete an order form and include a check payable to First Congregational Church noting "Memorial Fund — Bible" in the memo section.

#### BIBLE ORDER FORM

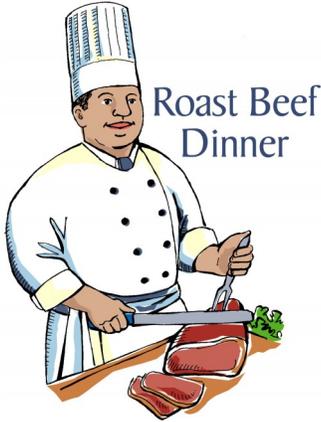
Name \_\_\_\_\_

Phone # \_\_\_\_\_

I would like to purchase \_\_\_\_\_ (quantity) Bibles at a cost of \$12 each.

Label should read: **(PLEASE PRINT)** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
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 \_\_\_\_\_



### COMMUNITY SUPPER

**Saturday, January 27th, at 5 p.m.**

Please join us for a delicious roast beef supper.

**Adults \$10 Children 10 & under—free**

(Volunteers to help serve are needed and appreciated!)

**Please support this church fundraiser either by joining us for supper, by helping with the supper, or both!**

*TIDINGS is a monthly publication of*

**First Congregational Church,  
United Church of Christ  
128 Central St., Auburn MA 01501**

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or [PastorBrian@auburnfirstucc.org](mailto:PastorBrian@auburnfirstucc.org)

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

*Web: [auburnfirstucc.org](http://auburnfirstucc.org)*



BULK RATE  
U.S. POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
Non-Profit Org.  
Permit No. 6  
Auburn, Mass

### January 2018

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

**OR CURRENT RESIDENT**