



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*

Well, a new year ends as a new year begins. We had another election, “the most important in our lifetime.” I am sure in 2118 many movies will be made about the historic 2018 midterm election. (That is sarcasm. No, I don’t believe even one movie will be made about this election.)

Now with the new year, we get our New Year’s resolutions. What are we going to add to our lives to make us better people?

That seems to be a problem of our age. There are so many things to do that we get overwhelmed. We can’t say no because of FOMO (Fear of Missing Out)! But, if we do too much, the good thing, like snow, becomes a chore instead of a joy.

So, I would suggest your New Year’s resolution be to do nothing.

The call of God to a Sabbath is important. A day to not shovel snow. A day to not be busy. A day to just be, to veg out. God calls us to a Sabbath every week.

We might not be able to Sabbath every week. But I would encourage you to take time to not do, rather, just be. That is why snow days are so special. They can be a Sabbath day, a day free from things to do, a day to recreate ourselves through rest and play.

Even if play is walking a dog that insists on dropping his front end down on the snow and plowing forward through the snow while being pushed by his back legs.

May God bless you and grant you a blessed new year —

Pastor Brian

SERMON TITLES:

1/6 “The Star”

1/13 “The Fish Motif” — Ron Klauke to preach (while Pastor Brian is away)

1/20 “So You Think Your Family Is Messed Up”

1/27 “One”

We are looking to hold **NEW MEMBER CLASSES** beginning January 27th. Classes will be held following the worship service for about 20 minutes on 2 to 3 consecutive Sundays. Please speak with Pastor Brian or a Deacon if interested.



During times of inclement weather, we have set up an account with WCVB - TV Channel 5 enabling us to report Church service cancellations. However, 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.



Important Notice

The Annual Meeting will be held following the 10 a.m. worship service on **Sunday, January 20th**. (All committee/board end-of-year reports are **NOW** due.) **The All Committee Meeting** (the first 2019 meeting of all committees and boards) will be on **Tuesday, January 22nd, at 7 p.m.** The **Installation of Officers and Board Members** will be during worship on **January 27th**.

2018 Pledges

Please note that donations received before Jan. 1st will appear on your 2018 donation statement. Also, any donations received by mail after Jan. 1st may be included on your 2018 donation statement **if** the letter is postmarked on or before Dec. 31st. Any donations postmarked after Dec. 31st will appear on your 2019 donation statement. Thank you!

2019 Offering Envelopes

Please pick up your 2019 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.

Bell Choir Schedule

The Bell Choir has completed a very successful fall series. We 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.

POTLUCK SUPPER & DISCUSSION GROUP

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

On Tuesday, January 15th, we will gather at 6 p.m. to discuss the Gospel of Luke.

All are welcome.

Pastor Brian welcomes your suggestions of books and movies.

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, Ron Klaucke, Herb Mower, Cindy Ryan, and Lori Stockhaus).

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:

1/6 Prudential Committee	1/13 Music Committee
1/20 Board of Deacons	1/27 Stewardship

Please note: 1/27/19 is the first coffee hour hosted by 2019 committee members. A new coffee hour schedule will be distributed at the All Committee Meeting on Tuesday, January 22nd.

Thanks for your generous Christmas gifts. I appreciate your kind thoughts and gifts. May God bless you in the New Year.
Pastor Brian

Please pray for Pastor Brian while he's on vacation beginning after worship on 1/6 through 1/13/19.



Please pray for the MacLeod family due to the recent passing of Nancy MacLeod.

Nancy Fay MacLeod, age 93, of West Millbury, MA, died, Monday, December 17, 2018 at Benchmark at Plymouth Crossings in Plymouth, after living with Alzheimer's. She was predeceased by her husband, the Reverend Robert J. MacLeod, and was the daughter of the late A. Lester and Henrietta (Davidson) Fay. She earned her Bachelor's Degree from the American International College in Springfield where she studied English. She taught in schools in Arlington, VA until she married and moved to Massachusetts. She enjoyed working in her vegetable and flower gardens, sewing and knitting, singing and playing the piano, walking, doing crossword puzzles, as well as traveling, music, theater, and "touring the grandchildren." She was an active member of our church. She also served in several leadership roles in the Massachusetts Conference of the UCC including serving as a moderator and recording secretary.

She is survived by her sons, Roderick MacLeod and his wife Betsy; David MacLeod and his wife Debra; and Bruce MacLeod and his longtime companion Beverly McGrath. She is also survived by her daughter, Judith Froman and her husband Scott; and her sister Paulina Wells. Nancy is survived by 7 grandchildren and 4 great-grandchildren and was predeceased by her sister, Margaret Freeman.

A memorial service was held at the First Church of Christ, UCC in Sandwich on Saturday, December 29, 2018.

Donations may be made in her honor to: First Congregational Church Auburn, 128 Central Street, Auburn, MA 01501; or The Associate Holiday Fund for Benchmark at Plymouth Crossings, 157 South Street, Plymouth, MA 02360; or Heifer International, One World Ave, Little Rock, AR 72202 (<https://www.heifer.org/>).

2019 COMMITTEE NOMINEES WANTED

As of this writing, 3 vacancies of 3 years each (2019-2021) still remain on the Board of Deacons. If you are a church member and interested in joining the Board of Deacons, please contact one of the Nominating Committee members: Sue MacPhee, Judi Taft, or Melynn Guilford. Sue may be reached at 508-832-9347 or email at susiemac2002@gmail.com. Judi may be reached at 508-752-2023 or email at jtaft01527@aol.com. Melynn's phone number is 508-904-2921 and her email is melyng3@yahoo.com. While a 3-year commitment is ideal, partial terms of 1 or 2 years will also be considered.

AN OPPORTUNITY TO GIVE THE GIFT OF WARMTH

On Sunday, January 20th, 2019, our very own beautiful congregation will be part of something special. Your Outreach Committee has partnered with Church World Services Blankets. CWS gives not only blankets, but also hygiene kits, school kits, and more. From January 2018 through June 2018, CWS has given over 75,000 blankets and kits all over the world, including thousands right here in our own country. They provide warmth to families that need to flee their home, families who need a little relief from disaster, and families who may not have the funds to heat their home this winter.

If you have not seen it already, there will be a sample blanket for you to touch and feel, and see what your \$10 is going towards. For \$10 a blanket, you get to provide warmth to a person in need. For \$50, you will provide 5 blankets to an entire family who needs warmth!!!!

Enclosed in the *Tidings* is an envelope for your donation. The deadline for all donations is January 20th. If you will be in attendance at church that day, more envelopes will be provided. If you would like to donate in someone's name, as a gift or memorial, we will have beautiful cards available in Fellowship Hall.

God has blessed us all with abundance. We have much to share! Remember, each blanket is only \$10 to us, but to someone needing a little help, these blankets are a vital resource! Checks should be made out to First Congregational Church noting CWS Blankets in the memo section. Thank you in advance for your help.



January Tidings from Here We Grow Preschool

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. 20th with a sing-along in the classrooms with family and friends. The 4-year-olds had their concerts in the morning on Dec. 21; a great time was had by all and parents were very generous with the goodies for our 4-year-old parties. We hope some of you were able to stop by and see the children perform. I am so grateful to my husband for coming to play Santa for the 4-year-olds; he thought he was done doing "school things" for HWG when our youngest graduated. And, a big thank you also to Pastor Brian for handling Santa detail for the 3-year-old 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 for in-house registration and we are already filling spots. We will continue with in-house enrollment until the middle of February, 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 5, 2019.

In February, families will be selling tickets for our calendar raffle fundraiser. Beginning March 1st, 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. Denise will have a sample calendar in the office. A big thank you to Katie Sharr for once again leading this fabulous fundraiser for us.

We wish everyone a Happy New Year.

Cristi Corey
Director
Here We Grow Preschool

Tidings 2019

Subscription Renewal Form

In an effort to offset the cost 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.



Happy New Year!

January is National Cervical Health Awareness Month, National Birth Defects Prevention Month, Thyroid Awareness Month, and National Glaucoma Awareness Month.

January 7th - 13th is Folic Acid Awareness Week.

January 22- 28th is National Drug & Alcohol Facts 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. 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 or someone you know will need something following a surgery, be sure to take it while it's there.

God Bless!

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

From the Stewardship Committee

Thank you again to everyone who participated in Consecration Sunday or returned a pledge card.

As of December 14, First Congregational Church received 83 pledges, payments, or donations for a total of **\$128,254**.

We appreciate your support, and we are looking forward to working with you in 2019!

In His love,
Your Stewardship Committee
Michelle Bigelow, Nan Johnson, Ellie Lowell
(Outgoing: Lauren and Jake Webb -- Many thanks!)

"None of us, including me, ever do great things. But we can all do small things, with great love, and together we can do something wonderful." – Mother Teresa

FROM THE CHURCH SECRETARY

Thank you, once again, for all the thoughtful ways you remembered me this Christmas season. Cards, goodies, gifts, phone calls all served to brighten my holiday. I am at a loss for words to adequately convey my appreciation for your generosity. You continue to be a tremendous blessing in my life.

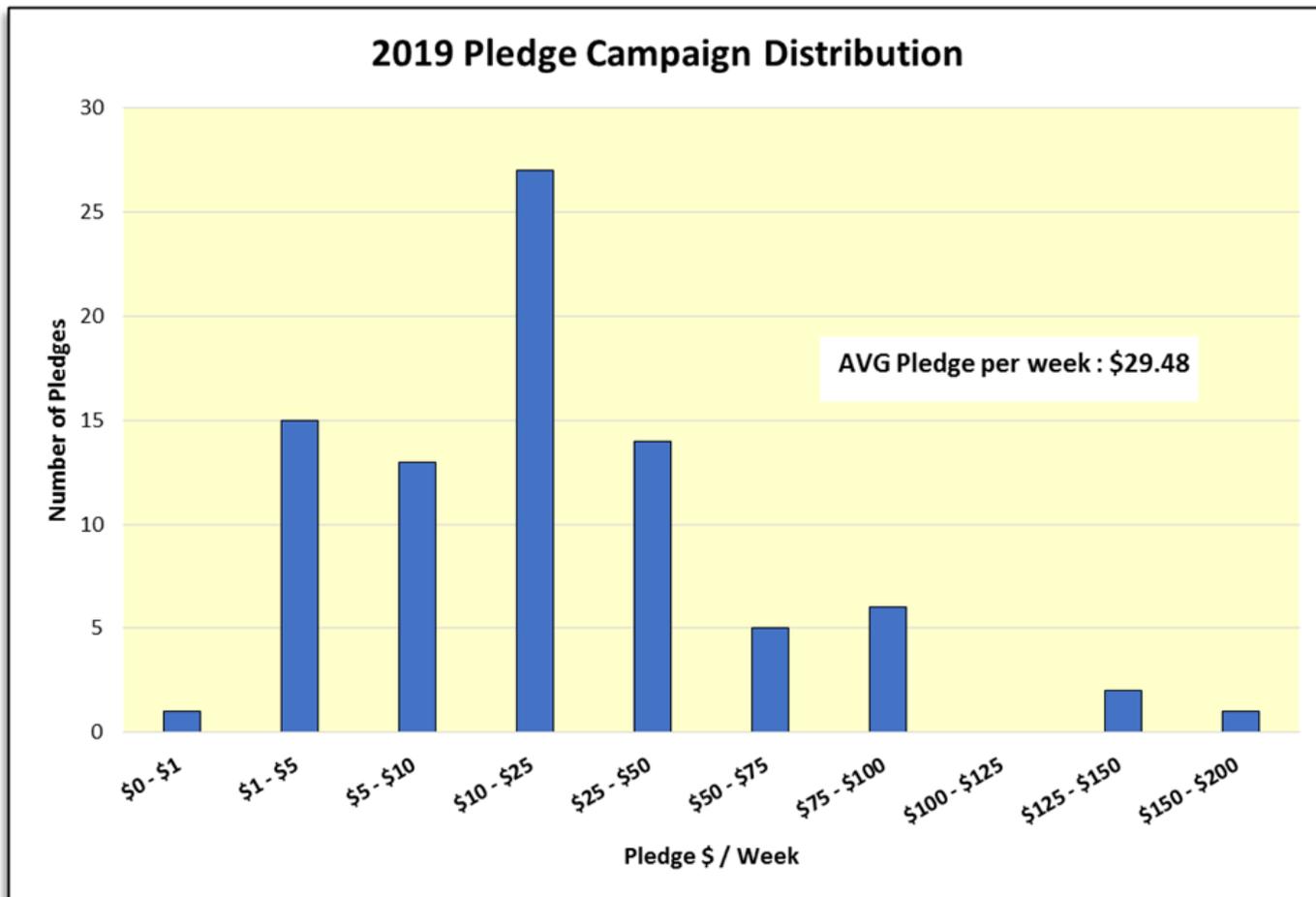
*Thank you and God bless,
Denise*



Please note Barbara Allaire's new address:

20701 Swallowtail Court
Venice, FL 34293

She would love to hear from you.

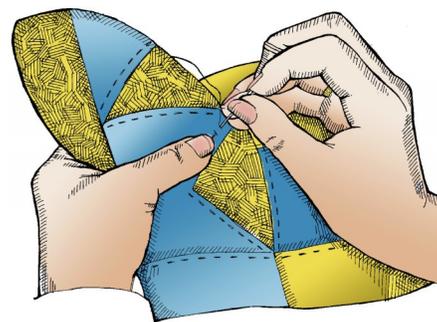


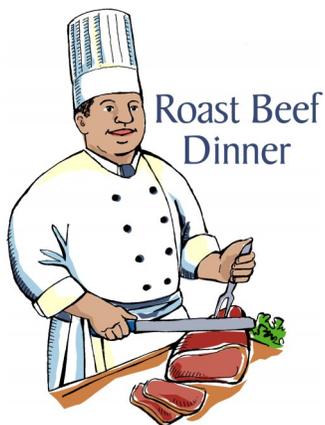
A REQUEST FROM AUBURN COMFORT BLANKETS

As the colder weather comes into season, it is a good time to get out the sewing machine or the knitting needles and crochet hooks to keep our hands busy. Auburn Comfort Blankets, a group who meets on Tuesday mornings at church, is looking for at-home sewers who could make some children-sized 100% cotton cloth quilts. As a rule, we prefer them to be SMALLER than 40" x 60". Even as small as 36" x 36" are used in the nursery at the hospital. We can supply you with fabric from our stash of donated material. If you are able to make just the quilt tops, we have people who can complete them with batting and a backing. We accept knitted and crocheted blankets as well.

Auburn Comfort Blankets provide blankets to ill or traumatized children. Blankets are delivered to UMass hospitals and to shelters for women and children. This organization is under the umbrella of the Christian Outreach Committee of the church.

Blankets can be dropped off any Tuesday morning in the "Old Kitchen" near the Vestry on the lower level of the church between 9 AM and Noon. Contact Sue Campbell at 508-799-2718 or Carol Luther at 508-752-8974 if you have any questions.





COMMUNITY SUPPER

Saturday, January 19th, 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**

Phone: (508) 832-2845

Office Hours: Mon.-Fri. 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Email: secretary@auburnfirstucc.org

or PastorBrian@auburnfirstucc.org

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

Web: auburnfirstucc.org



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OR CURRENT RESIDENT