



Start the New Year with
Prayer

January 2007

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!’”

The turn of the year can be a time for reflection on the past (year, years, lifetime) and for pondering the future (year, years, remaining lifetime). John Oxenham published such a reflective prayer in 1913.

“The Golden Cord”

Through every minute of this day,
 Be with me, Lord!
Through every day of all this week,
 Be with me, Lord!
Through every week of all this year,
 Be with me, Lord!
Through all the years of all this life,
 Be with me, Lord!
So shall the days and weeks and years
Be threaded on a golden cord,
And all draw on with sweet accord
Unto Thy fullness, Lord,
That so, when time is past,
By Grace, I may at last,
 Be with Thee, Lord.

I love the poetry of that period which mingled secular and religious thought unselfconsciously. The tension between the two that we experience today was non-existent.

I thank all of those who actively participated in the life of our church in 2006 and encourage your continued participation in all aspects of our church life in 2007. I appeal to our less active parishioners to get involved in the coming year. You will find church life to be more meaningful.

A blessed New Year to all.

Rev. Dr. Kenneth E. Knox



Rebecca McPherson 12/28
(sorry we missed it last month, Rebecca)

Happy Birthday

Lillian McPherson 1/19
Cassandra Stockhaus 1/23



New address:

Russell Romkey
Royal Nursing Center
545 Main Street
Falmouth, MA 02540
508-495-5230
Russell would love to hear from you.

Confirmation Class



Confirmation Class Survey

We want to thank those who participated in the Confirmation Class survey. A total of sixty-six surveys were completed and returned. The results are as follows:

1. Are you Trinitarian or Unitarian?
Sixty-three answered Trinitarian.
Two answered Unitarian.
One uncommitted.
2. Did you choose the First Congregational Church because it belongs to the U.C.C.?
Nineteen answered yes.
Forty-three answered no.
Four answered unsure.
3. Do you participate in this church for its faith and theology or its members and fellowship?
Fifteen answered faith and theology.
Ten answered members and fellowship.
Forty-one answered both.

Sixteen suggestions were shared regarding church activities including ideas for a Church costume party, high-spirited praise and more activities for younger members of the Church.

KATRINA



RELIEF

NEW ORLEANS TEAM PICKING UP STEAM!

Thanks to the efforts of the New Orleans team, Harry Wojciak, and our congregation, we've raised almost \$1,900 so far!

Jean McPherson organized a book drive and we have multiple carloads of books to take with us. Barnabas the Bear has gained 12 teddy disciples who will be staying on in New Orleans as our representatives. Our final

team is made up of: Jen Bohn, Al Boucher, Cindy Dube, Shirley Hill and Jean McPherson. (And, we know Bill Storie will be there in spirit!)

They'll be part of a group of approximately 22 members from the Federated Church of Berlin, Hadwen Park Congregational Church, Worcester Area Mission Society and us. So, it really is a joint effort.

We'll be having the commissioning of our team during the January 7th service. They will be leaving on January 13th and returning on the 20th. (Please remember them in your prayers.)

It's exciting to see everything taking shape. It won't be long now!

Thank you for all of your support.

The Outreach Committee



The Annual Meeting of the Church is rapidly approaching; consequently, our 2007 Stewardship Campaign is winding down. To date, we have received a total of \$134,181 from 142 pledge receipts; however, upon review of the pledges that have been received, it has been noted that there are a number of families who pledged last year that have not yet pledged for 2007. It is not too late to pledge for 2007. Please submit your pledge card as soon as you can.

One of our Responsibilities as a Member of this Church is to give systematically through the annual Stewardship Campaign for support of the Church and its benevolence. Our annual pledges provide for the operation of the Church and Church life as well as for the future of our Church, its Members and Children, and its many Ministries both within and outside Auburn.

Again, if you have not yet submitted a pledge card for 2007, please do so at your earliest convenience. Your pledge is needed. Pledge cards are available at the front of the Sanctuary, in Fellowship Hall, and in the Church Office. Completed pledge cards may be placed in the offering plate or mailed to the Church Office.

Remember *Stewardship: It's Heart Work!* It causes us to examine the purpose for which we manage our money. When our purposes come in line with God's plan, our stewardship becomes a great blessing to God, others, and ourselves.

Again, thank you all for your commitment to First Congregational Church in Auburn.

Our Committee hopes that each of you finds *Stewardship* a valuable addition to the monthly Tidings mailing. We welcome any comments and/or thoughts you might have regarding this publication or about Stewardship in general. Please feel free to speak with any one of us or send your comments via email to: Stewardship@AuburnFirstUCC.org. We look forward to hearing from you.

In His Love,
 The Stewardship Committee
 John Rockwood (Chair), Michael & Michele Schillinger, Al Boucher, Todd & Donna Dube



Joyful Noyse Rehearsal Schedule

1/7, 1/14 & 1/21	11:15 AM rehearsal
1/28	9:15 AM rehearsal We Are Singing For the Lord Is Our Light and One Little Candle
2/4, 2/11 & 2/18	11:15 AM rehearsal
2/25	9:15 AM rehearsal Wait on the Lord
3/4, 3/11 & 3/18	11:15 AM rehearsal
3/25	9:15 AM Keeping My Eye



January is National Blood Donor Month, Thyroid Awareness Month, National Birth Defects Prevention Month, and National Glaucoma Awareness Month.

The American Red Cross is always in need of blood donations. You can always walk in to the Red Cross Center on Plantation Street in Worcester or go to any of the satellites that they offer in the towns.

I'm happy to see the medical equipment in the closet changing from several items to only a few, and then several again. The equipment is there if you need it. I also know of more items that I haven't had room for, but can get if needed.

I have information on Community Acquired Illnesses; some that the usual antibiotics won't kill. Please check the table for ways to prevent getting them. The first most, and best way of prevention, is still GOOD HAND-WASHING!!! When you wash your hands, you should sing *Happy Birthday* as you are washing. That is the recommended time to wash!

Happy, Healthy New Year!

Debbie Pranaitis, RN
Parish Nurse



JUNIOR YOUTH GROUP

I hope you all had a wonderful holiday! As usual, just a reminder that we always need help in our classrooms! If you would like to help on any Sunday, please just come downstairs and we'll find a class for you to assist in! Our teachers do a great job, but they can't do it without some help.

The Jr. Youth Group will meet again on January 21st, immediately following church, in the classroom area. Any 6th, 7th, or 8th graders are invited to join us—we want to start planning some activities!

Thanks and God Bless,
Heather Zautner



The 26th General Synod

The 26th General Synod of the United Church of Christ will be in Hartford, CT, Friday, June 22, 2007 through Tuesday, June 26, 2007.

Church members are encouraged to participate and see the U.C.C. in action in a different way than we usually experience it. Because of security concerns everyone who attends must register in advance. It is the 50th anniversary celebration of the U.C.C. Watch for more information.

Coffee Hour Hosts

Jan 7 ~ Trustees
Jan 14 ~ Deacons
Jan 21 ~ Outreach

Church Supper

Please join us on
January 27th
at 5:00 p.m.

Servers will be:
The Prudential
Committee & The
Sampson Family



Happy New Year from *Here We Grow* Preschool

Here we are in the year 2007; I wonder how long it will take for everyone to stop writing 2006. Since the year 2000 rolled around, it seems that time is going by much too fast.

The staff and children at *Here We Grow* had a busy December. Throughout the month, the children were encouraged to bring in a toy to donate for the Toys for Tots Campaign. Once again we found that the families from HWG were very generous. As you know, HWG is an outreach program of the First Congregational Church and because of this we are proud to know that we have played a small part in helping others less fortunate to have a happy Christmas.

The children were busy preparing for the holiday programs which were held on Dec. 20th & 21st. One of the songs the children always sing during the program is "Happy Birthday to Jesus." This year they were taught to sign the song while singing the words. They did a wonderful job. The 2-day program sang one of their songs in Spanish—Feliz Navidad. The three parties went well with a visit from you-know-who.

At this writing, HWG is preparing for the school year 2007-2008. Most of the 3-day slots are filled with some spots remaining in the 2-day program. If you know of someone looking for a great preschool, please send them our way. Our Open House will be held on February 6, from 9:30-11:30.

Here We Grow will be closed for the holidays from the 21st, (after the 4's program), through January 2, 2007. The staff of *Here We Grow* Preschool hopes everyone had a safe and happy holiday. Until February, try to keep warm.

Sincerely,
Dawn Murphy
Director, *Here We Grow* Preschool

The following is a note that was enclosed in a Christmas card we received from Roger, Jude, and Ben Baker (son of John and Phoebe Baker).

I enjoy and appreciate the "Tidings" each month. It keeps me up to date on my "home parish". Did you know that Mom (Phoebe Baker) and (Rev.) George Hodgkins first put out the "Tidings" 50 years ago this year? It actually started late in 1955 as "The No Name Newsletter," but made its first appearance as the "Tidings" somewhere around spring of 1956. I turned the crank on the old manual mimeograph machine for those first issues.



LIBRARY TIDINGS

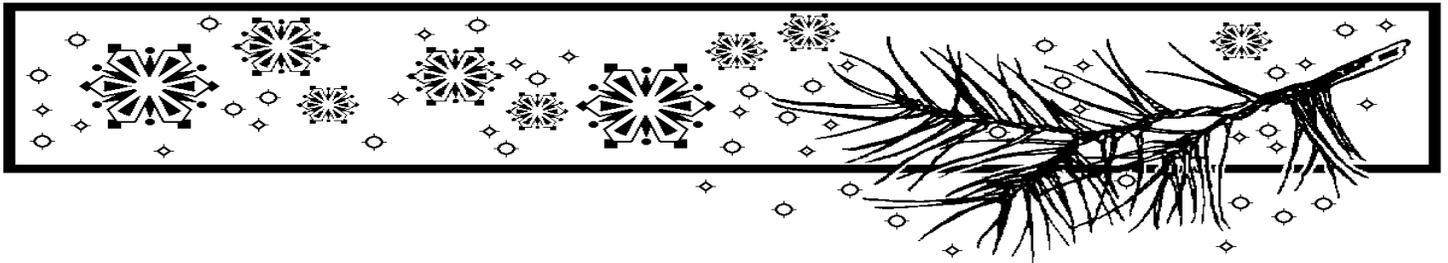
By Gloria Whitehead



With you, we greet the year 2007 with prayers that God will guide us as His ambassadors in all facets of our lives. The shelves in both the adult and children's libraries are filled with the works of talented and inspired authors which shake you from your lethargy or mediocrity and/or calm and reassure you when in doubt or discouraged. **KIDS FIT INTO THESE NEEDS ALSO.** Remember, parents, their library has books that relate to and help with, most every problem a child encounters—death, divorce, step-parents, moving, disabilities, drinking, Alzheimer's, AIDS, friendships, etc. *I Have Feelings* by Terry Berger covers 17 different feelings, the why and the treatment.

The "rounder" has given space to loosen up the books on shelves in the adult library. It also has changed the "line-up" of categories a bit, **BUT** the switch awakens you to some of the books you've never noticed. How about picking up something conducive to relaxation? If you've read, seen, or heard about any book that you feel should be in the libraries, just jot down the name of the book and author and drop it in the top drawer of the stand in the adult library, or give it to a "librarian". You may have done so already? Please try again. Make us work for your reading pleasure and may your church library books have a part in building our FAITH in 2007.

- The Library Committee



LENTEN BIBLE STUDY



Lenten
BIBLE STUDY

Ash Wednesday is February 21, 2007. If there are persons interested in a 5 week Lenten Bible Study please sign up in Fellowship Hall.

Possible days - Monday mornings: 9-10:30
Tuesday or Wednesday Evenings: 7-8:30

Possible Topics - Prophets
Bible Personalities
Events in Jesus' Life

There will need to be six people who can find a common time and topic so there are enough participants to provide sufficient discussion. Participants should plan to commit to all five sessions to build a sense of covenanted community.

Recruit your friends!! Join us!



BARBARA GOULDING (WARREN) LOFTUS
(JAN. 19, 1919 - NOV. 10, 2006)

Our sympathies to the family and friends of **Barbara Goulding (Warren) Loftus** who passed away on November 10th. She is survived by her son, David Loftus and a daughter, Lydia Anderson. She also leaves a brother, Richard Warren, a sister, Marjorie Mitchell, and several grandchildren. Barbara was born and raised in Auburn, and later moved to Oshkosh, Wisconsin. A memorial service was held on November 16, 2006 at Britton Funeral Home. Please remember her loved ones in your prayers.

LESTER J. WILSON
(Apr. 5, 1927—Dec. 14, 2006)

We also want to remember Lester J. Wilson, who leaves his wife of 57 years, Joyce (Hargreaves) Wilson; he is survived by 5 children and their spouses—his son, David Wilson and 4 daughters, Linda Vasas, Phyllis Orrell, Lori Stearns and Shelley Brooks, in addition to 11 grandchildren. He lived in Auburn for 22 years and in Charlton since 1971. He was founder of Wilson's Flower Shop (1952-1963). A funeral service was held, here, at First Congregational Church on December 18. Please remember his friends and family in your prayers.



Second Steps

When we had the idea to start a program, now called Second Steps, there were a million questions that went through our minds pertaining to problems that could arise and obstacles that would have to be overcome. We felt strongly enough about the program, though, to keep moving forward. One thing led to another, and looking back, it's amazing how things started to fall into place. In a very short time we should be helping our first participant start to build some credit. This would not have been possible without the money donated from the Sibley Fund and voted on by the people of the First Congregational Church. We thank you very much and hope that with God's help we can help others.

Steve Hill



- Jan. 7 - Commissioning of Missionaries to New Orleans
- Jan. 13 - Missionaries depart for New Orleans
- Jan. 14 - Annual reports available
Rededication of Church of the Good Shepard in New Orleans
- Jan. 20 - Annual Meeting at 3:00 PM in the Vestry
Missionaries to New Orleans return home
- Jan. 21 - Installation of Officers and Committee Members
- Jan. 27 - Church Supper at 5 PM
- Jan. 28 - Report of Missionaries to New Orleans 10 AM
- Jan. 29 - All Committees Meeting at 7:00 PM
- Feb. 4 - Boy Scout Sunday 10 AM

TIDINGS is a monthly publication of

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BULK RATE
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January 2007						
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