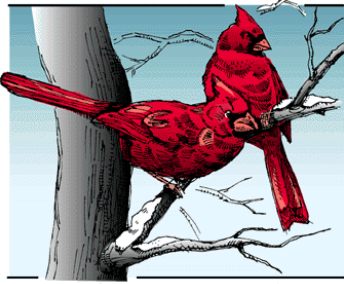


FIRST
CONGREGATIONAL
CHURCH



JANUARY
2006

Next Church Supper
January 21
5 PM

**"Why not go out on
a limb? That's where
the fruit is."**

- Will Rogers

Annual Reports

Available 1/8

Annual Meeting

1/14 at 3 PM

Preceded by a

Coffee Social at 2:30PM

All Committee

Meeting 1/16 at 7PM

**Installation of Lay Lead-
ers and Committees 1/22**

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!'"

On January 25, 2006 the First Congregational Church in Auburn will be 230 years old. On January 25, 1776 the church was organized at a worship service, and the first "Holy Sacrament of ye Supper" was observed on June 9th, 1776. Originally called South Parish, the community voted to build a meeting house in August of 1773 but it was not finished and occupied until 1784, eleven years later. From 1776 to 1784, 8 years, the pulpit was supplied by pastors from the area. Rev. Isaac Bayley was called by the church in 1784 as the first settled minister, and he served his whole ministry, 30 years, in the church.

Two hundred and thirty years of ministry in good times and tough times, through all the ups and downs of life in Auburn and in our natural history become a wonderful history and tradition that, with our commitment and God's blessings, will continue. But there are no guarantees. We watch some of our sister churches in the area wither and close. We are not under the same pressures that they have faced, but unless we are vigilant and committed and open to change it could happen to First Congregational. We call on all members of the church to honor those who have served this church during the past 230 years by loving, participating and supporting First Congregational Church in Auburn all the days of our lives.

God Bless,
Rev. Dr. Kenneth E Knox
Pastor

Spring Bible Study

The Pastor will offer two Bible Studies this Spring. The first will be Bible 101, getting acquainted and comfortable with The Bible. Basic information to help people use their Bibles will be offered pre-Lent on Wednesdays February 1 and February 15.

The second will be a four week Lenten Bible Study on a New Testament topic chosen at the Bible 101 study, offered on Thursdays, March 9, 16, 23 and 30th.

Any and all are invited to participate in either or both Bible Studies.

"Here We Grow!" Preschool

It doesn't seem possible that the year 2005 is over and 2006 is already here. I think back when the year was 1995 and thought, "won't it be odd to write 2000, and here we are already at 2006."

"Here We Grow!" Preschool children and staff were very busy during the month of December. Once again we had a tremendous response to the "Toys for Tots" campaign. The Marines needed a truck to carry all the bags of unwrapped toys which were donated by the HWG families. As a staff, we feel what a wonderful way to help our young children understand the true meaning of giving. We are pleased to know that we played a small part in helping others less fortunate to have a better Christmas.

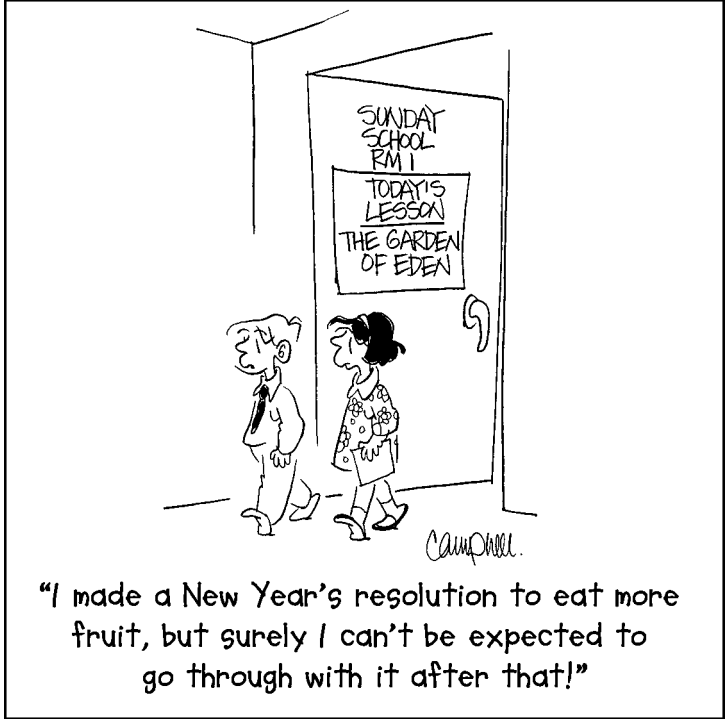
"Here We Grow!" hosted our 10th annual Gingerbread House Day on Saturday, December 3rd. We sold about 275 houses which helped raise about \$1900.00 to be used to fund field trips and purchase materials for HWG. It is with some joy and some sadness that the staff has decided this is to be the last year HWG hosts the gingerbread house day. With this time of year being soooooo busy for everyone, we thought 10 years was a great way and time to end it. We are now trying to come up with a new idea for HWG's second fundraiser for next year. All in all the day itself went very smoothly and was a fun day for all.

At this writing, HWG is preparing for the school year 2006-2007. Many spots are already reserved for the school year, but we do have a few remaining. If you know of someone looking for a wonderful preschool, please send them our way or call us at 508-832-8184.

The staff of "Here We Grow!" Preschool hopes everyone had a happy and safe holiday. Until next month, keep warm.

Sincerely,
Dawn Murphy
Here We Grow! Director

Coffee Hour Hosts	
Jan. 1	Trustees
Jan. 8 & 15	Deacons
Jan. 22	Outreach



From the Choir Room 'Choir Rehearsal—A Perspective'

It's Tuesday night, choir rehearsal. Time to sit down, have a few laughs, sing through a couple of anthems and call it a day. Well...not quite! What exactly do we do during rehearsal?

6:30 PM - We begin rehearsal with warm ups. Warm ups (which should be done standing) are essential to healthy vocal production. Gentle, legato warm ups are done to facilitate smooth and connected singing which many of our anthems call for. Detached warm ups help with up tempo pieces. We will use open vowel warm ups to facilitate high, clear singing with the sopranos, and fast repetitive warm ups to loosen the tongue. Sometimes we do slides, sliding down an octave on an open vowel, which helps relax the jaw and open the chest cavity. One common denominator warm ups have: they are the foundation to singing together as a choir, think together as a group and feel music together. This also helps with Rule No. 1 as a chorister, "watch the conductor." In the simple act of looking up each singer joins the ensemble in a very real and physical way.

We take out our new anthem and read through it once. This is to familiarize ourselves with the key signature, tempo and melody line.

Now it's time to go back and work the parts. We rehearse harmony parts first, as they are more difficult to learn and then the melody. (In an SATB choir, altos and tenors often rehearse together and sopranos rehearse with basses.) The harmony singers rehearse 4 pages or so to learn notes and rhythm. Then the Sopranos will rehearse the same 4 pages. When everyone feels comfortable, we put the parts together for this section. If there are difficulties we go back over it until this section is set. Then we move on to the next section of the anthem using the same procedure. Sometimes we will rehearse a new piece on 'ta' or 'loo'. This is to take away the distraction of the text and put the sole focus on learning the notes and rhythms. When these components are secure, the text is added in.

Often we will speak the text in rhythm to ensure we are all rhythmically precise with the words. Rhythmical precision is important because this puts 'energy' to the sound.

When the basics are secure- notes, rhythm, text- we move on to the next rehearsal stage; making music.

There are several key elements to building artistic singing into the rehearsal process. The most significant element for a choir is to sing "chorally" and in the context of an ensemble essentially we have to 'become a choir every time we gather,' which does not happen naturally. The longer the group has been together, however, the more vocally solidified they become. Other elements to address during rehearsal: energy, rhythmic attack, unified vowels, and lyrical tone. We rehearse our new piece stopping frequently to put breath marks in, work on diction, and vowel placement. Every voice tends toward a bright sound or a dark sound. We strive to blend the two using imagery. (Choir members always have pencils handy and have many markings in their music). Often we use words like 'gently' or 'warmer' or 'more dark than bright.' Often we rehearse the same passage repeatedly in order to be precisely together. (This is getting a little tiresome!) However, performing together precisely is the secret to rhythmic power. This in turn gives the ensemble 'energy'.

(continued on the next page)

(From the Choir Room continued)

We pay special attention to the last several bars of a piece as the ending is what people most remember. It is important for the choir to 'freeze' after finishing an anthem. Waiting a moment without movement keeps the mood created by the music and allows the silence to be part of that music.

It's Sunday morning. We've made it through our anthems and experienced some good musical moments, Now we can relax.....until next Tuesday that is.

Blessings,

Heather Moore
Minister of Music



Library Tidings

Did you say that, among your intentions of 2006, you were going to relax more and to read more good books? Consider becoming well acquainted with the libraries that are "sponsored" by the very same "outfit" that posts these monthly newsletters to you. Wouldn't it be ideal if it was a busy place before and after church. Also, remember that you can borrow books during the week—in other words, at any time that church is open.

There are some books in both the Adult and the Children's Libraries that are long overdue. We're starting our appeal for their return by just asking you to do so as soon as possible. Our policy is far more lenient than the public library, we'll bend for a variety of circumstances and there are no fines. If response is nil, we will publish a list of titles and borrowers to give you further assistance.

Radio station W.T.A.G. does a morning interview once a week with Penny from the Worcester Public Library at Salem Square. She recently explained that they have an extensive talking books library there which can even include delivery and pick-up. For further information you can call 508-799-1730 or 1-800-762-0085.

A very healthy and happy New Year to all and a thought from Henry Wadsworth Longfellow:

*The love of learning,
The sequestered nooks,
And all the sweet
Serenity of books.*

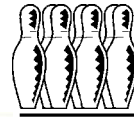
-The Library Committee

A Reminder from the Board of Trustees

We continue to hear of cases where people who have keys to the church use the building at non-scheduled times. It is critical that people who have keys to the church report all planned meetings to the church office. Our child protection policy means nothing unless we take this responsibility seriously. Please notify the church office of any and all meetings that are to be held on church property.

Thank You

Results as of:
December 16, 2005



Place	Team #	Won	Lost	Place	Team #	Won	Lost
1	6	72	40	4	5	50	62
2	2	60	52	5	4	48	64
3	1	59	53	6	3	44	68

Men's Records					Women's Records						
High	1st	Joe Pranaitis			361	High	1st	Tammy Clark			304
Triple	2nd	Nick Stockhaus			340	Triple	2nd	Lori Stockhaus			301
	3rd	Steve Gallant			336		3rd	Sue Kolodziejczak			287
High	1st	Joe Pranaitis			141	High	1st	Phyllis Gallant			121
Single	2nd	Adam Pranaitis			137	Single	2nd	Lori Stockhaus			111
	3rd	Nick Stockhaus			129		3rd	Sue Kolodziejczak			110
High Average	Joe Pranaitis				110.3	High Average	Lori Stockhaus				94.2
	High Single	High Triple	Total Pins	Games	AVG.		High Single	High Triple	Total Pins	Games	AVG.

Team # 1						Team # 4					
Mark Kolodziejczak	90	253	2475	36	68.8	Lee Palkovich	78	208	979	15	65.3
Harry Wojciak	105	279	3142	36	87.3	Phyllis Gallant	121	280	3408	39	87.4
Tim Lueth	121	316	3471	36	96.4	Bob Koopman	95	271	2845	33	86.2
Nick Stockhaus	129	340	4116	39	105.5	Eric Pranaitis	112	293	1646	18	91.4

Team # 2						Team # 5					
TJ McCracken	93	252	1778	24	74.1	Carrisa Lueth	84	219	2103	33	63.7
Ben Britton	105	253	2753	36	76.5	Linda Hardy	103	267	3214	39	82.4
Lori Stockhaus	111	301	3108	33	94.2	Adam Pranaitis	137	327	2224	24	92.7
Joe Pranaitis	141	361	3308	30	110.3	Will Johnson	116	316	3623	39	92.9

Team # 3						Team # 6					
Bob Palkovich	90	241	1760	24	73.3	Tammy Clark	109	304	3484	42	83.0
Dot Koopman	101	286	2374	27	87.9	Sue Kolodziejczak	110	287	2758	33	83.6
Carl Sandberg	101	258	3113	39	79.8	Don Aker	113	298	3571	42	85.0
Steve Gallant	119	336	3545	36	98.5	Errol Hall	107	308	591	6	98.5

Spares											
Mark Dyberg	98	278	541	6	90.2	Rachael Dumas	87	234	666	9	74.0
Cindy Gallant	82	185	185	3	61.7	Steve Dumas	92	230	856	12	71.3
Phyllis Hardy	88	240	474	6	79.0	Steven Koopman	87	230	449	6	74.8
Tracy Sandberg	86	216	1831	33	55.5	Heather Richards	117	320	6989	78	89.6
Debbie Pranaitis	107	293	5446	66	86.3	Cody McCracken	71	206	206	3	68.7
Patty Dyer	110	290	523	6	87.2	Lee Dumas	62	157	301	6	50.2
Eric Judice	97	275	275	3	91.7	Ben Allaire	141	347	8133	81	100.4
Rose Mary Dyer	102	277	551	6	91.8	Laura Koopman	85	230	1143	18	63.5
Laural Post	107	289	1051	12	87.6	Chris Kosak	66	167	167	3	55.7
Karen Dyberg	96	279	554	6	92.3	Krystin Kosak	67	184	184	3	61.3
Mike Sarcia	109	297	828	9	92.0	Norman Morgan III	99	246	459	6	76.5
Steven Post	93	258	498	6	83.0	Tom Picard	74	202	202	3	67.3
Tim P.	112	284	284	3	94.7	Linda Picard	101	246	246	3	82.0



Our sympathies to the family and friends of
Dubrelle M. Harrington
 November 2, 1914—December 2, 2005.

He leaves his wife of 65 years, Charlotte T. Harrington, his son's Richard, Lyle (Joe), and James Harrington and a daughter Sandra Jewell. The funeral was this past Wednesday. Mr. Harrington retired in 1981 from the Auburn Post office, where he was a letter carrier for 21 years. Before that, he worked for the Worcester Street Railway Co. for 18 years. Please keep the family in your prayers.

Our sympathies to Kelly Fant on the passing of her Grandmother Lorraine Fox.

Congratulations to two families this season who welcome new family members into their lives. Jodi and Chris Towne celebrate the birth of Jarrett Towne born on November 30th. The happy grandparents are John and Sally Watson. Also, Pete and Cindy Pellegrino welcome baby girl Mia Gail Pellegrino into their family. Mia was born on December 22. The happy grandparents are Paul and Debbie Pellegrino.

LOVE Love is *patient,*
 love is *kind.*
 It does not *envy,*
 it does not *boast,*
 it is not *proud.*
 1 Corinthians 13:4

Thank you to everyone who helped make this holiday a joyous one. What a beautiful gift and so thoughtful, too! For all you do, I just want to say Thank You!
 Heather Moore

A year in review...

Last year at this time, I was thinking, "Lord what have you gotten me into?" Christmas Pageant programs, Christmas Eve bulletins (2 sets) and Sunday's bulletin. Wait, don't forget the Tidings. What? Annual reports are needed by when? The financial insert in the report is wrong? But the meeting is tomorrow! You're kidding right? What flower list? "Lord, are you with me Lord? What have you gotten me into?". Well, the good Lord, He got back to me over the next couple of months. And do you know what the good Lord got me into? One of the nicest jobs I have ever had. Yes, there are days I think that you are all a little crazy but most of the time I think I am a little crazy. It has been a good year. I have faced flood waters, mad yellow jackets, you name it. I had the daylight's scared out of me as a result of the roofing folks dropping shingles right over my office without warning me. "I was calling out to you Lord, honest I was." I have been through sad times, I have been through happy times. I just want to thank you so much for a good year and for your gifts to me this Christmas. All of the gifts I received were so special to me. The gift of being loved and appreciated is a wonderful gift in and of itself but your generosity of a holiday bonus was very moving. You are a wonderful church, and some of the best bosses a secretary can have. From the bottom and the top of my heart, thank you for everything and for being you!

Thank You!

Jackie and I wish to thank all of you for the many cards, gifts, and remembrances you gave us this Christmas Season. We are also deeply appreciative of the generous check which we received on Christmas Eve. We appreciate your words and thoughtfulness.

Sincerely,

Ken and Jackie Knox

Your Secretary,
 Tammy

YOUTH ON A MISSION

Thank you to all who participated in our annual cookie walk. We raised \$332!

We had our first annual YOM Christmas party on December 18th. There were 13 of us sharing in the Christmas celebration enjoying tacos and a Yankee swap.

We are looking forward to the New Year with great anticipation. Our first meeting in January will focus on our upcoming auction on March 26th. If you would like to make a donation or have any questions please don't hesitate to speak to Jen and Randy Bohn or any YOM member. We will also be making a decision as to where we will be serving on our summer mission trip. We had originally thought we would try to get down to the New Orleans area but it appears that time and funds will probably prevent us from doing that. We are leaning towards North Carolina at this point and will keep everyone posted.

We would like to wish everyone a happy and healthy new year. We thank everyone for your support in 2005. Remember that YOM is open to anyone ninth grade and up please feel free to join us.

HAPPY NEW YEAR

Jan. is Cervical health Awareness Month, National Blood Donor Month, Thyroid Awareness Month, National Birth Defects Prevention Month, and National Glaucoma Awareness Month. Jan. 9-15 is National Folic Acid Awareness Week. Information about Folic Acid will be available on the Health table in Fellowship Hall.

I can't emphasize enough about good hand washing to help you stay healthy this winter. It's the best prevention and it doesn't cost a lot of money!

I'm planning on providing more information about "End Of Life " issues this spring. We talk about making these arrangements and many times don't actually make the arrangements until the decisions have to be made. You can get a Health Care Proxy witnessed at the church office any time there are two people present. The forms are available at the church. Working as a " bedside nurse" I see these situations and I hope to help families avoid them.

Debbie Pranaitis
Parish Nurse

Tidings - 2005 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 in this is entirely optional and will not affect whether or not you receive the Tidings.

Annual Renewal - \$10
(10 issues, no July or August issue)

Please enclose check or money order
for \$10 payable to:
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Please write **Tidings** in the memo area

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

Name : _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Summer Solstice

On June 17th, we will be having our second annual Summer Solstice Celebration! It's never too early to start preparing. We will be having a yard sale at this event, so designate a place in your house or garage to start gathering items that you would like to donate for this event. Remember:

One man's trash is another man's TREASURE!!!

There will be more information in the months to come but if you're already as excited as we are, please see Cindy Dube with any ideas, thoughts, or to volunteer.

Thank You!



The child comes home from his first day at school. His Mother asks, "Well, what did you learn today?"

The kid replies, "Not enough. They want me to come back tomorrow."

*TIDINGS is a monthly
publication of*

**First Congregational
Church
128 Central St.
Auburn MA 01501**

Phone: (508)832-2845

Fax: (508)721-2539

Web: auburnfirststucc.org



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