



# 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!’”*

## FROM THE PASTOR - God is Never Changing

I do not think we, Americans, like the idea of eternal, never-ending things. Take tattoos, for example. Tattoos are permanent. They cost more to remove, than to get. There are rules about being sober and old enough to get one. We want tattoos to be a sober, mature decision since they will be with you all your life. I think most tattoos are sober, sane decisions. There is great art in tattooing. Tattoos can have a great effect on a person's idea of themselves. I know people who think tattoos make them more pretty. Or help them to honor and remember a beloved person who has died. According to *The Week* magazine, 23% of women and 19% of American men have a tattoo. Also according to *The Week*, I am just a little too old for a tattoo; 30-39 year olds are most likely to have a tattoo (38%). Then it drops off as the cohorts get older with only 12% of 50-64 year olds having a tattoo.

I am not opposed to tattoos. There are great artists who do wonderful work. I like tattoo TV shows that show what artists can do with a difficult canvas - human, living skin.

The Army gave me some tattoo prejudice. Tattoos were for the Navy and Marines, not the Army. This was made clear by sergeants and senior officers. Though a soldier could not get punished just for getting a tattoo, they could (and would) find another reason to punish a soldier if they ever found out he had gotten a tattoo on active duty.

I find the only reason I do not get a tattoo is permanence. I do not think I can love any piece of art for the rest of my life. According to *The Week*, tattoo removals have increased 32% in 2012. So I am right to wonder if that tattoo will still be an asset in 20 years. Could we accept a tattoo that no longer seems perfect? Could we live with a love that does not live up to our (high?) expectations?

My old neighbor was a Navy man in World War II. He had a tattoo on the inside of his forearm. We shared a driveway so we were close. I asked him about the tattoo, did he like it? He replied, “I would not get it again, but it is part of me and I could not imagine myself without it.” My neighbor had run a business, raised a family, been a deacon, a trustee and many other things. The tattoo was a reminder that he had once been a young sailor out, literally, to take on the world. That sailor would always be a part of who he was.

So with God - God does not change, but we change. As we change, our understanding of God changes. “When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put the ways of childhood behind me.”

It is hard to move into a mature place with God. Life can be hard on our faith. God can feel so close we can touch Him. At other times He feels as distant from us as the far side of the universe. For many, God seems distant in times of crisis. For me, I feel the distance more in normal times than in crisis.

*Continued on page 3 . . .*

**Palm Sunday/Passion Sunday** is March 24th. Our worship service will begin at 10:00 a.m.

**Maundy Thursday Service** will be held March 28th at 7 p.m.

**Good Friday** is March 29th ~ Auburn's Ecumenical Service will be held at Faith Baptist Church, 22 Faith Avenue in Auburn at 12:15 p.m.

**Easter Sunday** is March 31st ~ with our Sunrise Service at 6:30 a.m. at Hillside Cemetery and two worship services - 9:00 a.m. & 10:30 a.m. at the church.

~ All Are Welcome ~



Coffee Hour Hosts

- March 3 & 10 Stewardship Committee
- March 17 Deacons
- March 24 Board of Trustees
- March 31 Easter Sun. - no coffee hr.

JOYFUL NOYSE

Calling all children, are you interested in being a part of our children's choir, Joyful Noyse? If you would like more information, please speak with our Minister of Music, Heather Moore.

*We would like to thank the church family for all of the beautiful cards that were sent in celebration of my 90th birthday... We appreciate the thoughtfulness and thank God for my church family.*

*Thank you,  
May Stone and family*



Happy Birthday to:

**BIRTHDAYS**  
THIS MONTH

3/16 - MacKenzie Lillian Young  
3/26 - Jean McPherson

**COMMUNITY SUPPER**  
**Featuring Chicken Piccata**

Saturday, March 16th at 5p.m.

Adults - \$10 Children - \$5

Servers: Outreach Committee  
(additional volunteers are always appreciated.)

**Please note:** immediately following the delicious supper, the Luthers will be showing Part 2 of a slideshow travelogue (set to music) of their trip to Newfoundland. While Part 1 of their trip was featured at the Feb. supper, Part 2 can be appreciated apart from the first showing. The Luthers do a wonderful job, so be sure to mark your calendars.

Laura Koopman wishes to thank our church secretary, Denise, and her husband, Jim, for their recent help. Also, please pray for Laura as she continues to recover at home from an auto accident.

CRADLE ROLL ROTATION

- |                               |                    |
|-------------------------------|--------------------|
| 3/3 Bessie Morgan             | 3/10 Jennifer Bohn |
| 3/17 Linda Hardy              | 3/24 Shirley Hill  |
| 3/31 Judy Murphy (10:30 a.m.) | 4/7 Cindy Dube     |

SUNDAY SCHOOL ROTATION

**3/3 - 3/24 Easter Story Unit**

- |           |   |   |
|-----------|---|---|
| Art/Craft | - | Ellie Lowell  |
| Games     | - | Melynn Guilford   |
| Science   | - | Donna Dube  |
| Cooking   | - | <b>volunteer needed</b>  |

Please speak with Jean McPherson if you're available to help out in Sunday School. Remember, this is only a 3 week commitment. Thank you!

**People to People Program**

Congratulations to Cassie Stockhaus! Cassie has been selected, interviewed and accepted to participate in the People to People Student Ambassador Program and will be traveling to France, England, Wales and Ireland this July (the 1st - 20th). The People to People Program was founded by President Dwight D. Eisenhower in 1956. He believed that if people from different cultures could come together in peace and friendship, eventually, so would countries. The program tuition is very costly. Donations to help offset these expenses would be most appreciated. Please speak with Cassie, Nick, or Lori Stockhaus for more information on how you can help — **thank you!**

*Continued from page 1 . . .*

It is hard to grow close to God. It takes time and prayer. It is easier to reject God. Even easier to reject the church. It is easy for a church to be cruel. Even easier to seem cruel. For many people the church is a scary place. A place they have been hurt before. I know my mother and brother have been hurt by the church in the past. It affects how open they are to the church even today.

Our relationship with our God and church should be like our relationship to a good tattoo. Our love will ebb and flow as time and circumstance play across our lives. I hope that we will always love God and work to be close to Him. I also pray that we will be a church that is gentle and kind. There are too many people already feeling hurt and rejected by the church. Let us not add to that number.

Pastor Brian

### **SERMON TITLES FOR MARCH**

3/3 "Food"

3/10 "Home"

3/17 "Danger Is Coming"

3/24 Passion Sunday

3/31 "They Ran"

#### **Children's Time:**

3/3 "What Am I (or God) Thinking?"

3/10 "NEW CREATION!"

3/17 "What Use Is Boasting?"

3/24 Passion Sunday

3/31 "Not Worthy, Yet Worthy"

We have received news that our friend/host in Haiti, Franceli Joseph, is healing well and is expected to make a full recovery. Thank you all for your prayers and concern. Check out this month's newsletter from Monadnock Bible Conference at [www.monadnockbible.org](http://www.monadnockbible.org) for more information.

Now that the crisis has past, Randy and I are moving forward with our plans to return to Haiti as part of another medical mission team this fall. The dates are September 30th to October 9th. It is a slightly longer trip than we have done before, 10 days instead of a week. We will be venturing out of Port-Au-Prince to some more remote areas for the clinics. At least that is the plan as of this moment; as with any mission trip, plans are ALWAYS subject to change based on weather and other conditions.

Of course, because the trip is longer it is more expensive. This year's trip is \$1,700 per person. The funds include food, travel, lodging as well as some of the medical supplies we will be taking with us and purchasing in Haiti. The Outreach Committee has generously supported us by paying our \$500 deposit....so we're on our way, but we still need your help. If you would like to help, please speak to Randy or me or you can give your donations directly to Lori Stockhaus.

As we get closer to departure, probably some time this summer, I will have a list of over the counter medicines we will also be collecting for our trip. "Love In Motion," the division of MBC that runs the mission trips, has another medical team going to Haiti in March. When they return we will have a better feel for exactly where we will be going and what additional items we may need.

We thank you from the bottom of our hearts for your support, your love, and your prayers for the people of Haiti and especially the children.

In His Service,  
Jennifer & Randy Bohn

**SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATIONS:** Applications are now available in Fellowship Hall, and in the church office for anyone interested in applying for a scholarship. **Applications are due by Apr. 15th.**



March is National Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month, National Endometriosis Awareness Month, National Kidney Month, National Nutrition Month and Save Your Vision Month. March 3rd - 10th is National Sleep Awareness Week, the 4th - 8th is National School Breakfast Week, the 11th - 17th is Brain Awareness Week, and the 14th is World Kidney Day. March 17th - 23rd is National Poison Prevention Week and the 18th - 22nd is National Youth Violence Prevention Week. March 24th is World Tuberculosis Day and the 26th is Diabetes Alert Day.

I recently attended a seminar at the DCU Center in Worcester and got information about diabetes. It will be on the table in Fellowship Hall. Please help yourself, for you or a friend. I also have some pill containers that you can take; sorry, I put out what I have.

Also, here's a reminder to check the closet if you or someone you know needs equipment. It changes frequently, so check again in a few days.

Happy Spring and Happy Easter!

Debbie Pranaitis, Parish Nurse

P.S. I will be away March 8-17.

### THE D.U.C.K.S. ARE COMING!

On Feb. 10 after church our own Garry Mahlert, one of the co-chairs for the Relay for Life, sat down with Barbara Cowden, Beverly Scobie, Shirley Hill and me and explained The Relay for Life. This wonderful event will be celebrating its 10<sup>th</sup> year this September 6-7th at Lemansky Park. We all agreed to begin a team. We have decided on a team name, the D.U.C.K.S. The D.U.C.K.S. stands for Dedicated United Christian Kindred Spirits.

We are looking for others to join our team! You can join up until Sept. 6th, so don't worry if you were not able to make the meeting. We will have a meeting in March to discuss future fundraising ideas. Already scheduled is a candy and Easter egg sale on March 17. We will have plastic eggs already filled with goodies for you to purchase for those special little, or not so little, ones in your life. We will also have fudge and homemade candy to purchase. On Mother's Day we will have a cupcake and cake sale. What better gift for that special Mom than a freshly baked cake or a dozen cupcakes beautifully decorated? We would love to have more people on our team so please talk with any one of us for more information. Details about upcoming meetings will be in the bulletin. Remember, if we all work together we can help to "Quack out cancer."

Jean McPherson for The D.U.C.K. Team



We encourage you to stop by our Church Libraries when time allows. You're sure to find something of interest for young and old alike amongst the vast books available in both our Adult and Children's Libraries.

"The things I want to know are in books.  
My best friend is the man who'll get me a book I [haven't] read."

— Abraham Lincoln

### Here We Grow Preschool

Our Hebert Candy Bar fundraiser was once again a huge success. We ran it for the entire month of February giving everyone time to seek out all family friends and relatives and encourage them to buy, eat, and put on weight, all the while enjoying CHOCOLATE.

The children and staff celebrated Valentine's Day with parties on the 13th and 14th. The children had the opportunity to be mail carriers during circle time. Everyone had a great time. The parents provided snack which consisted of cookies, ice cream/Jello and juice.

February was a busy time in the office. We have had many interested families visiting **Here We Grow** and signing up for the next school year. Did you know that most families come to HWG because a friend, neighbor or relative has recommended us? That is our best type of advertising. **Our Open House is scheduled for March 6th, 12:30-2:00.** Thank you to Denise who designed our open house flyers and thanks to Judy for printing them for us. We do have spots available in most of our sessions. We are hoping for the remaining spots to fill up quickly. With the economy as it is, we are seeing a slight decline in enrollment. If you know of anyone looking for a preschool for their child, please send them our way. Many visitors remarked on how bright the classrooms are and loved that we can offer an indoor playground. I'd like to thank Dave Sampson, Stan MacPhee, and Wayne Prouty for the extra "things" they do to help HWG.

Looking ahead to March, we will be offering Parent Volunteer Month. Parents can spend time in their child's classroom as a helper for the day, do science experiments (if they are brave) or read a story at the end of the day. We do have an open door policy throughout the year, but we find with Parent Volunteer Month many parents who work will take a day off and come spend it with their child. We enjoy having the extra set of hands to help. Neal Primaeux will be here the first week of March for picture taking. We also have a planned visit from the Tooth Fairy to talk to the children about healthy teeth. Once again, State Trooper Kevin Kennedy is organizing the fingerprinting of our 4 year old classes. Ending out the month of March, we will be celebrating Easter with the coloring of eggs and a visit from the Easter Bunny. All in all, we are looking forward to a busy, exciting March.

Until next month, stay healthy, warm and safe.

Dawn Murphy, **Here We Grow** Director

Please join us for *Here We Grow's* Open House  
Wednesday, March 6th from 12:30 P.M. to 2:00 P.M.

The Deacons are **looking for volunteers** to assist in a **Saturday Sanctuary Cleanup Day, March 9th, starting at 8:30 a.m.** and lasting for approximately 2 hours. Within that timeframe, a couple of the Deacons will specifically clean the altar pieces that require special polishing; i.e., candle holders, collection plates, etc. and the remaining Deacons **and volunteers** will primarily dust the Sanctuary. It will be nice to spruce things up as we look forward to our Easter Sunday services.

### LET'S EAT PANCAKES! All You Can Eat Breakfast Fundraiser

**SATURDAY, MARCH 16TH SERVING FROM 8 A.M. TO 10 A.M.**

**at the Knights of Columbus, 487 Worcester St. (Rte. 169), Southbridge, MA**



Tickets are \$5 and will benefit: Blessings Farm, Inc., a non-profit equine ministry for financially underprivileged youths, ages 10-17. Tickets are available at the door. If unable to attend, Amber Premo is accepting donations to this most worthy cause.

Blessings Farm, 50 H. Foote Road, Charlton, MA ~ 508-248-1411 ~ [www.blessingsfarm.org](http://www.blessingsfarm.org)

"Our desire is to share our love of horses and the love of God, who blesses us with all things."

## FROM THE DIRECTOR OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Happy Spring! As I write this, I can hear the plows out in the parking lot clearing more snow. I hope by the time you read this the snow is all gone, and we are looking to the ground for the tips of the crocuses. As the bible says, there is a time for everything and I think the time has come for the snow to go!

Due to the snow, we have had to cancel some planned youth events. Our 30 hr. Famine was cancelled, as well as our CityReach weekend. We may reschedule the 30hr. Famine but, unfortunately, we will not be able to reschedule CityReach. **We have 3 chaperones so the kids can attend Monadnock Bible Conference weekend on March 22-24. Our thanks to Alex Brownwell, Rich McPherson, and Shannon Hartmann!** This is an amazing weekend with hundreds of other middle and high school aged kids glorifying God and sharing the gospel with speakers, songs and fun games.

**The annual Palm Sunday breakfast will be at 8:00 a.m. on March 24.** Please sign up ahead of time so we will have enough food to share. This has become a very enjoyable tradition. **Our annual Easter Egg Hunt will be on Sunday, March 24 after service.** Again, we will have sign up sheets in fellowship hall.



We will have started our Easter Unit in Sunday school by the time you read this, and then we will only have 2 more units left for this school year. April's unit is on the good Samaritan and May's unit is on friendship. So please be a friend to the children and help them see through YOUR actions what they are reading about in class.

Think Spring!

With His guidance we serve,

Jean McPherson  
Director of Religious Education

We continue to hold scheduled potluck suppers (a combination of potluck supper and a book/movie club with discussion time) in the vestry/downstairs kitchen. The next get together will be on **Tuesday, March 26th at 6 p.m., when we'll be discussing the book, *The Gift of the Jews*, by Thomas Cahill.** Remember, you do NOT have to read the book; if you just want to come for food and fellowship, please do! EVERYONE is invited to join us for any or all parts of the evening.

## AUBURN TOWN CLEAN-UP

On Sat., May 4th, there will be a town-wide clean-up underway here in Auburn. It will begin with registration at the Fire Station at 8:30 a.m. The actual clean-up will go from 9 a.m. 'til 11:30 a.m. and then volunteers will meet at the Outback Steakhouse for a free lunch! (Thank you to the Outback for this community outreach.) The Auburn Chamber of Commerce has asked if we would be willing to organize a team to clean-up the area surrounding the church. If you're interested in volunteering, please call the church office at 508-832-2845.



**SAVE THE DATE:** We have reserved the following dates with Lifetouch (formerly Olan Mills) for photo sittings for our new Church directories: May 3rd, 4th, 14th, and 15th. On Friday, May 3rd; Tuesday, May 14th; and Wednesday, May 15th; sittings will be booked between 2 p.m. and 9 p.m. On Saturday, May 4th, you may book a sitting between 10 a.m. and 5 p.m. (Lifetouch does restrict certain time slots to avoid wait times.)

**Please take a look at the enclosed informational flyer.** Our photo directory kick-off will begin on Mar. 15th, which is when we can begin to book appointments for May. You'll be able to book your appointment through a link on our website, by calling the Church office, (508) 832-2845, or during designated coffee hours.

Look for more information to come in future bulletins, next month's *Tidings*, and on our website:

[www.auburnfirstucc.org](http://www.auburnfirstucc.org).

Please be in prayer for the following families who suffered the recent loss of family members.

**Robert P. Geddes**, 75, a 47 year resident of Auburn, died on Tuesday, February 5, 2013 in UMass Memorial Medical Center after an illness. He leaves his loving wife, Beverly (Cialone) Geddes, and their children, Penny Berry and partner, Ralph Kennedy, Paul Geddes and wife, Deborah, and Lynn Largesse and husband, Dan, as well as 3 grandchildren, Alyssa Geddes, David Engstrom and Reanna Largesse; and a sister, Carol Chaffee, and several nieces and nephews. He is predeceased by his brother, Warren Geddes, and sister, Marilyn Kennelly. Mr. Geddes worked as a mechanic and later as the parts manager at Acura of Auburn for many years before retiring in 2000. Bob was a member of the Citizens Emergency Response Team (CERT) in Auburn. He also delivered "Meals on Wheels" in his spare time. Above all he enjoyed spending time with his grandchildren. A funeral service was held on Monday, February 11th, here at First Congregational Church in Auburn, MA.

**Nicholas S. Sundeen**, 23, of Douglas, died Sunday, Feb. 24, 2013 at home. He was employed at Sundeen Furniture in Northbridge and was attending Johnson & Wales University in Providence, RI. A lifelong resident of Douglas, Mr. Sundeen was born November 15, 1989 in Worcester, son of Scott H. and Cheryl A. (Pawlowski) Sundeen of Douglas. He was a graduate of Holy Name High School in Worcester in 2008. Nicholas possessed a magnetic personality and loved being with family and friends. He was a member of the Singletary Rod & Gun Club in Sutton, enjoyed spending summers on the Cape Cod Canal, and attending the races at the Thompson International Speedway in Connecticut. He enjoyed all sports including paintball, fishing, football, and was an avid Celtics fan. In addition to his parents, Scott and Cheryl, he is survived by a brother, Jason C. Sundeen of Douglas; the love of his life, Kristine M. Jones of Douglas; his paternal grandmother, Carole E. Sundeen of Auburn; his maternal grandmother, Janice K. Pawlowski of Hopedale; his maternal grandfather, Edward J. and his wife, Janet Pawlowski of Whitinsville; and many aunts, uncles, cousins and friends. He was predeceased by his grandfather, Henry Sundeen. A Mass of Christian Burial was held Thursday, Feb. 28, 2013 at St. Denis Church in Douglas. Burial followed in Hillside Cemetery, Central Street, Auburn.

Also, please be in prayer for the Stockhauses on the recent passing of their Aunt Mabel. Mabel was 87 and died February 13th. She is survived by her husband, Francis. Although Aunt Mabel wasn't a blood relative to Lori and Nick, she treated them like she was and they loved her like one. Aunt Mabel will be dearly missed.

### ESTATE PLANNING?

Have you included the church in your will or estate planning? Please prayerfully consider if the Lord would have you remember your church when completing your will.

*"One of the greatest missing teachings in the American church today is the reminder to men and women that nothing we have belongs to us."*

Gordon MacDonald, American Pastor & Teacher

### One Great Hour of Sharing – OGHS

One Great Hour of Sharing is administered by the Wider Church Ministries of the United Church of Christ and provides support to people in over 80 countries. When you make a gift to the offering you become a partner in the refugee, disaster relief, and community development efforts of the UCC in the United States and internationally. Through this fund lives are changed, and sharing brings joy!

You'll find offering envelopes enclosed in this month's *Tidings*. Please drop it in the offering plate on Sunday or mail to: FCC, 128 Central Street, Auburn, MA 01501. Thank you!

*I would like to thank everyone for your prayers after my fall. I have been in rehab and am now continuing rehab at home.*

*Hope to be back in Church soon.*

*Thanks again,*

*Don Woodcock*

**Easter Plant Order Form**

Once again, we will be accepting orders for Easter plants. On Easter Sunday there will be a special insert in the bulletin noting who the plant is in honor of and who it's from. This is a wonderful way to pay tribute to a loved one while also decorating our Church Sanctuary. Just complete the order form below and drop it off at the Church or mail it to: FCC, 128 Central St., Auburn, MA 01501. Please submit your order form with payment **no later than Sunday, March 17th.**

**Lilies (1 stem) \$10.00** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Lilies (2 stems) \$16.00** \_\_\_\_\_

**Tulips \$16.00** \_\_\_\_\_

Color Choice: Yellow \_\_\_\_\_ Pink \_\_\_\_\_  
 Red \_\_\_\_\_ Orange \_\_\_\_\_

**Blue Hyacinth \$10.00** \_\_\_\_\_



**Dedication: (PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY)**

PLEASE PRINT YOUR DEDICATION EXACTLY HOW YOU WOULD LIKE IT TO APPEAR IN THE BULLETIN INCLUDING WHO IT'S FROM.

**In Memory of / In Celebration of/for:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Name:** (contact person) \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_

If you have questions, please call Connie or Ron Hanks at 508-832-4227 or the church office at 508 -832-2845. Extra order forms are available online, from Denise in the office, from a Deacon or on the table in Fellowship Hall.

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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**March 2013**

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**OR CURRENT RESIDENT**