



2021

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

FROM THE PASTOR:

“Marching to Zion”

As I thought about what to write for March, the hymn *We’re Marching to Zion* came to mind.

“We’re marching to Zion,
beautiful, beautiful Zion;
we’re marching upward to Zion,
the beautiful city of God.”

Zion is another name for Jerusalem and Jerusalem is a symbol for heaven. Marching and singing go together. In the army we sang when we marched. Amazingly, it made the march easier. The marches where we were not allowed to sing were a slog.

Marching to Zion makes me think of people singing going up to heaven. A pleasant image.

The hymn continues:

“Let those refuse to sing,
who never knew our God;
but children of the heavenly King,
but children of the heavenly King
may speak their joys abroad,
may speak their joys abroad.”

I really miss singing. Worship is one of the only places I sing. I am glad it says, “Make a joyful noise unto the Lord.” Singing raises my spirits. Even if it does not sound so good; music brings joy.

I had Mrs. Bean as my music teacher for 9 years. Mrs. Bean taught my brother and Mom as well. As I have told Paulette, our organist, and Herb Mower, bell choir director, Mrs. Bean did not give me any keys. So when musicians talk of key of G, I am lost.

I have asked Paulette and Herb for these keys that the musicians talk about, but I have yet to get them. Maybe they are afraid of the mess I would make if I got into wherever the lock the musical keys go to.

With the vaccine getting to people, soon we can sing again, like we will on the way to paradise. Maybe the pearly gate keys Peter holds are also musical keys.

“Then let our songs abound, and every tear be dry;
we’re marching through Emmanuel’s ground . . .
to fairer worlds on high.”

May this world be better and may God welcome our marching song as we march to better worlds on high.

Pastor Brian

MARCH SERMON TOPICS

- March 7 “Words to Live By”
- March 14 “How I Feel about COVID”
- March 21 “The Greeks”
- March 28 “Triumphant Entry” - Palm Sunday

**DAYLIGHT SAVING
TIME BEGINS MARCH 14TH**



Remember to set your clocks ahead one hour when retiring on Saturday evening, March 13th.



Happy Birthday to:

- 3/9 - Paula Bigelow
- 3/16 - MacKenzie Young
- 3/26 - Jean McPherson
- 3/28 - Ryan Minor
- 3/29 - Everett Webb

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH'S SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATIONS

We have several scholarships we would like to award to church members seeking to continue their education. Specifically, there are two scholarships dedicated to those studying within the medical field, and one scholarship gives preference to those who are musically inclined and, of course, we have several unrestricted scholarships as well.

Please contact Denise in the church office at 508-832-2845 or email secretary@auburnfirstucc.org to request an application.

APPLICATIONS ARE DUE BY APRIL 15TH.

FROM THE DIRECTOR OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Happy Spring! As I write this we are awaiting an ice/snow mix tomorrow and possibly more snow later in the week. I hope by the time you read this we will be having more spring like weather.

On Valentine's Day the Sunday school kids and I made snow angels, painted the snow with colored water, and built caves on the church's front lawn. The plan was to build snow people but the snow was not cooperating; while fluffy snow is great for shoveling, it stinks for snowman building. At the end of the service the congregation was greeted by big and little snow angels and given valentines and treat bags. Some of the treat bags included a white cloth mask and two fabric markers so you could decorate your mask. It will be fun to see everyone's creativity at the next week's service.

The Board of Ed has decided to go ahead with our annual **EASTER EGG HUNT**. It will be on the front lawn on March 28 (weather permitting). We will find a way to keep socially distant and, of course, we will be wearing masks. Please let me know if your child/ren will be attending, and if there are any diet restrictions we need to be aware of. Again, **it is important that you contact me and let me know who will participate and ages or allergies.**



Easter Egg Hunt

I do love the snow, but I am looking forward to the spring and getting my hands in the dirt. Enjoy the rest of winter and let's welcome the spring with thanksgiving.

God can even give you the strength to keep going within those difficult situations. God calls us to maintain our faith and integrity and we respond by trusting in Him.

Rev. David Weyrick

Jean McPherson, Director of Religious Education



Please plan to join us for our Palm Sunday service on March 28th beginning at 10 a.m.



Here We Grow Preschool

We are just over halfway through our school year, and what a year it has been! We have all had to make a lot of adjustments this year, but the staff and families of Here We Grow have been absolutely amazing. I cannot say often enough how much I appreciate everyone's patience, understanding, and flexibility this year.

Our *Prize Calendar Fundraiser* has begun! Here's how it works. You purchase a calendar that lists all the prizes available. There's a section on each calendar to complete contact information that's turned into the Here We Grow office. During each day in April we will pull a name and the winner will receive the prize corresponding to that day on the calendar. Once again we have some fantastic prizes available; thank you to all who donated. Denise has some calendars available in the office if you would like to purchase one. The children will start pulling names April 1st, and we will post the winners in the Here We Grow entryway.

We are still collecting sneakers as well; there is a box in fellowship hall. We received just over \$20 for the last batch that we mailed in. Thank you!

If you have a friend or family member looking for a preschool for their little one, we would love to meet them. Please have them call or email the school; we are currently doing tours during evening and weekend hours. Remember, children can start at 2 years, 9 months and do not have to be potty trained. We do have spots available for next year, and we are hopeful that our year will look a little more "normal" in the fall.

Cristi Corey
Director
Here We Grow Preschool

PLEASE NOTE: The bell choir will resume rehearsals beginning March 14th after the worship service. Anyone interested in learning more about the bell choir is welcome to join them.

HERE WE GROW FUNDRAISER

Gotsneakers?



Thank you to all who have already donated to the Gotsneakers? fundraiser. For those who may not have heard, a sneaker recycling organization, Gotsneakers?, will pay Here We Grow for their donations of new and used wearable, reusable athletic sneakers and cleats.

Acceptable items include:

casual sneakers, walking sneakers, running sneakers, basketball sneakers, skateboard sneakers, sports cleats (rubber soccer and baseball ONLY; non-metal bottom cleats), and canvas sneakers (ONLY Converse All-Star brand canvas sneakers are accepted.)

Please NO baby/toddler footwear.

Look for a collection box in fellowship hall or drop donations off to the church office, Monday-Friday, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Thanks so much for your support!

From the Stewardship Committee:

We would like to welcome Marilyn Kulesa to the Stewardship Committee. We will enjoy getting to know her, and working with her.

We had our February Zoom meeting. (Praying 2021 will be a healthier, and happier year.) Hoping at some point to be able to get back to in-person church with all of our church family, and in-person meetings.

A big shout out to Denise for organizing the mailing list for the family tree ornament gifts (2020), and for mailing out the ornaments to out-of-towners. We also learned that Denise and Judy added a note to the ornament so people would know who it came from. Thank you!

Thank you Nan (and Will for navigating) for stepping up and delivering approximately 40 ornaments in Auburn. We definitely appreciate all the helping hands.

In His love,

Your Stewardship Committee: Nan Johnson, Ron Klaucke, Marilyn Kulesa, Ellie Lowell, Debbie Mahlert, and Linda Mahlert

I Peter 4:10 *“Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God’s grace in its various forms.”*

Heavenly Father, I pray that Your Word will continue to remind us that our gifts, and abilities are attributed to us so that they can be used to serve others. I pray that You touch my heart so that I may serve honestly. Help me to be a good steward of Your grace. Let the work that I do be a reflection of You, and I pray that I will use my gift accordingly to Your will and purpose. In Jesus Name I Pray. Amen.

2021 COMMITTEE NOMINEES STILL NEEDED

At our Annual Meeting in January, the Nominating Committee presented their report with the new and re-committed nominees to Boards and Committees. **However, openings still remain. Of particular concern is the amount of openings on the Board of Trustees and the Board of Deacons as they may run into trouble with meeting quorum requirements. (Many committee meetings are held via Zoom at this time.)**

BOARD OF TRUSTEES: two vacancies of 3 year terms and one vacancy of 2 year term.

BOARD OF DEACONS: Listed in our by-laws there should be 12 Deacons; however, if one vacancy of 3 year term and/or one for 1 year term could be filled for meeting decisions/quorum requirements; then, the Deacons would utilize age appropriate acolytes for the church service only.

BOARD OF EDUCATION: one vacancy of 1 year term and one vacancy of 3 year term.

THANK YOU to all who have already committed to joining one or more of our various committees and boards. The Nominating Committee will continue to search for support throughout the year as long as there are vacancies open.

If you are a church member and interested in filling a nomination, please contact one of the following Nominating Committee Members or the church office. Contacts: Judi Taft may be reached at 508-341-4530 or email jtaft01527@aol.com. Sheila Skog may be reached at (978) 387-7705 or sheilaskog@gmail.com. Sue MacPhee may be reached at: 508-864-2454 or email susiemac2002@gmail.com. Thank you for your help!



March is DVT (Deep Vein Thrombosis) Awareness Month, Endometriosis Awareness Month, and National Nutrition Month. It is also Brain Tumor Awareness Month, National Colorectal Cancer Month, Brain Injury Month, and DM (Diabetes Mellitus) Awareness Month.

March 3 is World Hearing Day.

March 1-7 is Eating Disorders Awareness Week.

March 7-13 is World Glaucoma Week.

I still have March 28 as a tentative date for the vaccine. Last I heard, Auburn Pharmacy hasn't gotten the vaccine. I will keep you posted. To those who have gotten the vaccine, I'm glad, and I hope you didn't have any side effects. In the meantime, please continue to wear your masks and cover your nose... it's connected to your respiratory system and this is an airborne virus!

God Bless! Stay safe!

Debbie Pranaitis

Parish Nurse

Cell #: 508-612-4521

LENTEN SERIES

Due to COVID, this year we are holding virtual movie nights rather than our soup and sandwich gatherings during Lent. The Wednesday nights in March are: 3/3, 3/10, 3/17, and 3/24.

On February 24th we watched *Sister Act*.

The remaining movie suggestions include:

Invictus

VeggieTales Esther

Evan Almighty and

Prince of Egypt or *The 10 Commandments*.

We will have guides for where to stream the movies and guides on issues the movie raises. We will have movie discussion Zoom meetings on Wednesday nights as well. Thoughts and questions and the Zoom meeting invite will be emailed prior to each movie. Please notify the church office at secretary@auburnfirstucc.org if you would like to be added to the email list.

We hope you'll plan to join us in this Lenten series.



News from your Outreach Committee

We met on February 23rd, together, but socially distanced, in Fellowship Hall. It was so nice to be among church family again. Some of us were having a hard time remembering when was the last time they were even at the church! How sad our "new normal" can be sometimes. Now that the vaccine programs are up and giving shots, maybe, I pray, there is an end in sight to some of the restrictions.

It was decided at our meeting to donate \$250.00 each to Special Olympics of Massachusetts and to the LIFT Program. As luck would have it, Cristi, the Director of Here We Grow, was able to tell us a little about what is happening with their program during the pandemic. Cristi and her family are very much involved with Special Olympics. It was our summation their level of donations is probably down due to lack of exposure and programming.

\$250.00 was also designated for the LIFT program in Worcester, a first of its kind program to help women who work the streets find help in putting an end to their lifestyle. We hope to have more to share about this program when we all begin filling our pews again!

Finally, \$500.00 was allocated for Worcester Fellowship. Due to Covid 19 they are conducting their Thursday Cafe from the parking lot of All Saints Church. I quote from a letter we received in December from Rev. Zach Kerzee, "For so many of the men and women who call Worcester Fellowship home, our services are the only time that they can count on being treated with kindness each week." He goes on to say, "Your financial support means so much to our church, and to the men and women who seek out spiritual guidance and support through the services we provide. When you donate to Worcester Fellowship you know that the money you give will be stretched and honored..." Lastly, he says, "We ask that you continue to pray for the homeless and vulnerable in Worcester, for our board, church leadership, and for me as the pastor of Worcester Fellowship."

As a committee we find great satisfaction in "hands on" projects. We are looking into Lasagna Love, a program started at the beginning of the pandemic. It has become a national movement cooking and delivering meals, feeding families, spreading kindness, and strengthening communities. I have signed up as a volunteer and we would like to hear from anyone else who is a volunteer or is interested in becoming one. You can call me, Cindy Dube at 774-238-0260. Below is their flyer. You can scan their QR code or visit them at lasagnalove.org to learn more.

God bless you all,

Cindy Dube, Chairperson, Pat Bukoski, Judy Murphy, Deb Pranaitis, Judi Taft, and Marion Woodcock



NEED A HAND FEEDING YOUR FAMILY? YOUR NEIGHBORS WANT TO HELP!
REQUEST A FREE LASAGNA DELIVERY WITH THESE 5 STEPS:

- 

1 Scan the QR code or visit lasagnalove.org
- 

2 Get matched to a local lasagna mama or papa
- 

3 Coordinate a delivery day and time
- 

4 Get a safe, contactless delivery
- 

5 Sign up again the next month!

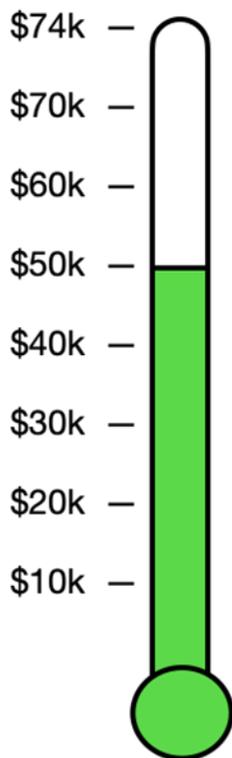
Feed families, spread kindness, strengthen communities.

 @wearelasagnalove  @wearelasagnalove  www.lasagnalove.org

First Congregational Church Boiler Fund

Pledge Goal: **\$74,137**

Pledge Total: **\$48,115**
65% of goal



Thank you, once again, to all who have donated and/or pledged to the Capital Campaign so far. As mentioned previously, we are including in the monthly *Tidings* and weekly bulletins a moving thermometer to show our progress on this campaign. We are still looking for approximately \$26,000 to help return the borrowed funds to the church's invested funds.

Remember, you may pledge over the 3 year plan*, make a one time donation, or donate from your own invested funds to this project.

For those who have been in the sanctuary, we hope that you continue to enjoy the warmth from the new system.

Board of Trustees

* Please complete the pledge portion below if you would like to pledge over the 3 year plan.

Please complete this pledge form and return as soon as possible to church address below.

I answer the Trustees' call to support financially the New Boiler Project.

As part of my response, I will give \$ _____ as my (circle one)

Weekly / Monthly / Quarterly / Annual contribution

for a total of \$ _____ during 2021 through 2023.

Name _____

Street _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Please return to: **First Congregational Church, 128 Central St., Auburn, MA 01501**



**COMMUNITY YARD SALE—PLANT SALE!!!
SATURDAY, JUNE 12TH ~ 8 A.M. TO 2 P.M. ~ RAIN OR SHINE**

We are happy to announce the return of our Community Yard Sale/Plant Sale! COVID has been difficult for all of us, so we are very excited at the thought of gathering with our church family and our neighbors on the church's front lawn.

So . . . do you have an accumulation of things that are just too good to throw away, but you no longer need? Don't have enough to hold your own yard sale? Store those items and plan to join us on the Church lawn for **OUR COMMUNITY YARD SALE on June 12th!** As we've done in the past, we will rent spaces and tables, plus we'll do all the advertising and remember, our prime location can't be beat! We will also have a church table and are accepting donations. Please **NO** computer equipment, TV's, clothing, or VCR tapes. Thank you.

Since we've all been cooped up for so long, we are expecting a large turnout. So, please mark your calendars and plan to support this church fundraiser by renting a space or volunteering to help at the yard sale - plant sale.

SPACES ARE \$20 FOR CHURCH MEMBERS & \$25 FOR NON-MEMBERS.

TABLES ARE AVAILABLE TO RENT FOR \$5 EACH.

Call Cindy Dube at 508-832-6646 or the church office, 508-832-2845, to reserve your spot!

One Great Hour of Sharing — “Let Love Flow.”

This year's theme for One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS) is “Let Love Flow.” The gifts you give to OGHS are combined with those of others across the United Church of Christ bringing a greater impact to the work being done with local and global partners. Your support enables us to respond to a variety of global and local concerns by addressing advocacy, sustainable development, refugee and asylum issues, migration, and disasters, and assisting those most in need and vulnerable among us.

The COVID-19 pandemic, wildfires, earthquakes, hurricanes, and flooding have ravaged communities in the United States and worldwide, leaving families and communities in desperate need of assistance. Some of these disasters have occurred in your hometown, or in nearby communities or to friends and neighbors in countries thousands of miles away, across the globe.

When you share your gifts, you “Let Love Flow” and your generosity ensures that, even in the midst of uncertainty, the transforming power of God's love continues to change lives here and around the world.

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



Lillian McPherson has accepted a position as a high school history teacher. (Congratulations, Lillian!)

Her new address is:

1800 Beaumont Dr., Apt 222
Norman, OK 73071

Please pray for her. Also, she would love to hear from her church family.

It's that time of year again to order your Easter plants. If you want to order lilies, since the supply is going to be limited this year as a result of pandemic worries and the date Easter falls on, please have your lily order in by Sunday, March 14th. All the other plant orders are due by Sunday, March 21st. Any questions, please reach out to Michele Schillinger (508-259-2239).

An order form is included on the back page of this newsletter.

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 in the Sunday offering plate or mail to the church, 128 Central St., Auburn, MA 01501. Please make checks payable to the church noting Easter flowers in the memo.

*****IMPORTANT!*****
PLEASE NOTE:
 Lily orders are due by
 March 14th.
 All other orders are due
 by March 21st.

PLEASE CHECK
 HERE _____ IF
 YOU WILL **NOT** BE
 PICKING UP YOUR
 PLANT.

- Lilies (1 stem) \$11.00 _____
- Lilies (2 stems) \$22.00 _____
- Lilies (3 stems) \$33.00 _____
- Tulips 6" \$10.00 _____

Colors: yellow _____ pink _____
 purple _____ white _____ red _____

Tulips 8" \$18.00 _____

Colors: yellow _____ pink _____
 purple _____ white _____ red _____

8" Hydrangeas \$28.00 _____

Colors: blue _____ pink _____

6" Pansies (mixed colors) \$7.00 _____

6" Martha Washington Geraniums \$13.00 _____

Colors: white _____ pink _____ lavender _____ purple _____

Given By: Name(s): _____

Include above name(s) in dedication? Yes _____ No _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

In Memory or Celebration of _____

Questions? Please call Michele Schillinger at 508-259-2239.

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



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

March 2021						
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