



# *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!’”*

## God and the Church Need Us

We often choose a church and choose to participate in a church based on what that church has to offer to us and how it pleases us.

That is a very 21st century, consumer - oriented, American outlook. However, it is not really a Christian outlook. We might rather ask (paraphrasing J.F.K.), “Ask not what God and the Church can do for you, ask what you can do for God and the Church.”

Such as:

- Attend church regularly to say that God and the Church are a priority with you—and you honor your relationship.
- Support the Church and its ministries regularly, not as a membership fee, but as an opportunity to be part of what Jesus has suggested we do for our community and our world with the resources God has placed in our care.
- Bring our children to church regularly to teach them our faith by example and nurturing—as we promised at their baptism.
- Participate in the leadership of the Church and its groups with joy that you can use the gifts God gave you to fulfill his will.

Learn—read, listen, share, teach—God is still speaking; don’t put a period where God put a comma.

Sincerely,

Rev. Dr. Kenneth E. Knox  
Pastor



<u>Coffee Hour Hosts</u>	
5/6 ~	Personnel Relations
5/13 ~	Prudential
5/20 ~	Prudential
5/27 ~	Library
6/3 ~	Library
6/10 ~	Board of Ed
6/17 ~	Stewardship
6/24 ~	Historians/Memorial



### Baptisms in April

On April 15th, we celebrated the baptism of **Hannah Elizabeth Sullivan**, daughter to John and Amy Sullivan and granddaughter of Mike & Cindy Dube.

We also celebrated the baptism of **Katherine Elizabeth Small** daughter of Steven and Laura Small. May you continue to support Hannah and Katherine in their spiritual journeys.

### CONGRATULATIONS!

Congratulations to Carolyn & Terrence Gagnon on the birth of their son, Matthew Terrence Gagnon, born April 4, 2007. Matthew weighed in at 9 lbs. 4 oz. and 21" long.



Congratulations also go out to Jessica & Todd Stalker on the birth of their daughter, Madelyn Louise Stalker, born April 9, 2007. Madelyn weighed in at 7 lbs. 1.4 oz. and 19¼" long. The proud grandparents are Jonathan & Deborah Mahlert and Mary & Bill Brodeur.

### **VOLUNTEER HELP IS NEEDED!**

The Auburn Chamber of Commerce is sponsoring a "Spring Clean-Up Day" on Saturday, May 12<sup>th</sup>, from 8:30-11:30 a.m. The Clean-Up Committee is looking for volunteer support from local church groups, youth groups, civic clubs, organizations, students and residents to help clean up our town. Volunteers should report to the Auburn Fire Station at 8:30 a.m. to receive their assigned routes for clean-up. At 11:30 a.m. all volunteers will meet at the Outback Steakhouse at 771 Southbridge Street, Auburn for a cookout and entertainment. **Please note:** members of our church's Outreach Committee are planning on helping out. There is a sign-up sheet on the table in Fellowship Hall if you'd like to lend a hand.

**Identity Theft Alert** - It has come to our attention that there is yet another scam being used on unsuspecting individuals. In this con, someone calls posing as a court officer who states that a warrant has been issued for your arrest due to your failure to show up for jury duty. The caller claims to be a jury coordinator, and when you protest that you never received a summons for jury duty, they request your social security number and date of birth in order to cancel the arrest warrant. Don't be the next victim—**remember always to be on guard when someone calls asking for your personal information.**

We've also been informed of another phone scam where a caller identifies himself as a telephone company employee conducting a test on the telephone lines. He states that to complete the test he needs you to touch nine (9), zero (0), the pound sign (#) and then hang up. By pushing 90#, you give the requesting individual full access to your telephone line, which enables them to place long distance calls and bill them to your home phone number. **DO NOT press 90# for ANYONE.**

### Join us for our Church Supper

May 19<sup>th</sup> at 5:00 p.m.

Adults—\$8  
Children—\$4

Featuring a Roast  
Beef Dinner



We are looking for a group or family to serve the supper. If you're able to help please call Paul Gemme or the church office at (508) 832-2845. Thank you.

### EQUAL EXCHANGE COFFEE



We are selling equal exchange coffee during Coffee Hour on Sundays. The cost is \$6 a bag. If you're interested in ordering coffee for your office please speak with Nancy MacLeod at (508) 865-9691.

This is our opportunity to support Fair Trade and is brought to the First Congregational Church by the Board of Christian Outreach.

### AUBURN RELAY FOR LIFE

Auburn Relay for Life to fight cancer will hold its kick-off on Tuesday, May 15th from 7 to 9 pm at Camp Gleason, Auburn.

Established teams are asked to attend to pick up team packets, and a special invitation goes out to anyone who may be interested in becoming involved. New teams are needed to make our Relay a success. If you would like to learn more about what Relaying is, please join us for this informational meeting. Come, enjoy some refreshments and speak informally with team members.

Plans are underway for Auburn's 4th annual Relay for Life to be held at Lemansky Park on September 7th and 8th. A moving tribute to survivors and loved ones and lots of fun activities for all ages are planned. Also, this year at the Relay, we plan on cutting hair for "Locks of Love."

If you are unable to attend, but would like more information, please call Charlotte McMahan at (508) 832-5080, Barb McManus at (508) 832-6896, or Roberta Stencel at (508) 832-4954.

### Outreach News



By the time you read this, the newest member of our New Orleans Team, Allison Hill, will have returned from her mission. The Outreach Committee commissioned her in our last meeting, and she was part of a pilot program to help in the classrooms of the most devastated schools in New Orleans. Thank you, Allison! We look forward to hearing about your adventures.

We're shipping tons of books to New Orleans - and that's not a figure of speech. First Congregational has created an amazing infrastructure for shipping books, based on our wonderful contacts with Don Shugrue and the Estes shipping company. The large discount we get enables us to ship the quantities of books we (and other churches) have received from our generous donors. In mid-April, we shipped approximately 3 tons of books!

Please consider attending the UCC General Synod on Saturday, June 23. If you are interested, contact Reverend Knox or an Outreach member. We can help defray some of your expenses, and we will arrange transportation if there is enough interest. There is quite a lot going on for this 50th anniversary celebration including free admission to the Community Worship Service on Sunday, June 24th at 3 p.m., at the Civic Center. You can check it all out at the UCC website: [www.ucc.org](http://www.ucc.org).

Auburn is having its annual town Spring Clean-up on Saturday, May 12. There is a cookout afterwards sponsored by Outback Steakhouse, so we'll be full of goodies as well as civic pride. Please sign up in Fellowship Hall or let any members of the Outreach Committee know if you're interested in pitching in. Let's have a good turnout from First Congregational.

We'll again be contributing to Rainbow of Caring this year: Blanket Sunday for Mother's Day and Tools of Hope for Father's Day. The contribution envelopes are enclosed in this month's *Tidings*.

Thank you for your support,  
The Outreach Committee

Ellie Lowell, Cindy Dube, Gayle Farley, Alicia Schillinger, Ernie Smith

A sizeable donation has been made to the  
Sanctuary

Renovation Fund  
in memory of  
Marion Malone.

Thank you.



On Sunday, April 1st, Pearl  
Morrill was presented the  
Boston Post Cane,  
honoring her as the oldest  
living resident of Auburn.

**Congratulations, Pearl!**



### *Here We Grow* Preschool May Tidings

As I sit here writing for the *May Tidings*, it is sleeting outside and we are expecting a Nor'easter on Monday. I can only hope spring will soon arrive and stay.

With the month of May fast approaching, we are preparing for the end of another school year. The 4 year old children will be visiting Mary D. Stone School to have a tour of the Kindergarten rooms. Our goal is to help them be at ease with the upcoming transition into Kindergarten.

This year the 2-day programs will be visiting Noodle Noggin N' Bean on May 8<sup>th</sup> for their end-of-year field trip. The 3-day programs will be venturing off to Davis' Farmland on May 10<sup>th</sup>. All of us will travel by buses provided by R.H. White. We just hope the weather will be kind on the day we go to Davis' Farmland.

Winding down the school year will be the 3 year olds' graduation and Spree Day, and the 4 year olds' Spree Day and graduations. This is a very busy, yet rewarding, time of year for all. Some will be leaving *Here We Grow* for good, and some will be returning next year as 4's or even possibly a year or two later with siblings who are one or two this year. Either way, it will be a time for goodbyes and/or good lucks. While at *Here We Grow*, the staff and the families who attended the program have not only become part of each others families, but also friends to each other.

Once again, some of the staff will be returning for the last two weeks of June to run the summer program. This year's themes are: World Explorers and Royal Digs. At this time we are just about filled for both weeks.

*Here we Grow* will close for the summer on June 29<sup>th</sup>. The staff will return in late August to prepare the classrooms for another fun-filled year of learning.

At this time I would like to "Thank" Pamela Mitchell and Christine Messier for 9 wonderful years of working with the children and families of *Here We Grow* and for being such good friends to the staff. Pam is waiting to get into a Nursing Program and Chris would like to work in the medical field or with animals. Wherever they end up, everyone at *Here We Grow* wishes them well.

Until June, have a wonderful spring.

Dawn Murphy  
Director, *Here We Grow* Preschool

### Library Tidings

by Gloria Whitehead

A couple of weeks ago, five wonderful ladies put \$25 into my hand for a book for the Children's Library, or the Adult Library would be O.K. as well—"your choice". My mind was blank. Perhaps you remember when Heather mentioned a couple of "heavenly happenings" (h.h.) in her "Musical Notes" in the *Tidings*. So be it. A couple of days after receiving this special gift, a book titled *How To Raise an American* was being discussed on the radio—another h.h., and it covers both children and adults. Myrna Blyth, a best-selling author, former editor-in-chief of the *Ladies Home Journal*, columnist for the *National Review Online*, etc. and Chriss Winston, the first woman to have headed the White House Office of Speechwriting, has been a deputy assistant of labor and heads her own communications consultancy, Corporate Word, together have written *How to Raise an American* with one big purpose. Kids today are bombarded with a lot of negative images in T.V., movies, music, and even in the classroom. In some cases it's cool to bash America and the patriotism gap is widening. To quote Theodore Roosevelt, "We want to make our children feel that the mere fact of being Americans makes them better off . . . This is not to blind us at all to our own shortcomings; we ought steadily to try to correct them; but we have absolutely no grounds to work on if we don't have firm and ardent Americanism at the bottom of everything."

#### SO COME ON—LET'S WAKE UP

The "meat" of the book includes:

1. What parents need to know historically (the basics)
2. Ideas for dinner table debates: topics that will leave the whole family talking —your rights, it's the American way, about values, beliefs, and ideals

#### STOP—IT IS NOT ALL HEAVY

3. Inspiring stories of American courage, honor and ingenuity
4. The top spots (5) to visit in every state
5. New ways to celebrate every holiday
6. Star-spangled projects: challenging quizzes, creative crafts and other easy-to-do activities for all ages

#### STOP—BRAND NEW BOOK—MARCH 2007

7. Pass the popcorn: the 100 all-American movies perfect for family viewing
8. 60 minute solutions that easily and seamlessly instill a love of this country

#### AND MORE . . .

This list does not describe the book at its best. Though it focuses on parents and kids, there's something in it for grandparents, teachers—everyone.

Let's fortify and love our country for its greatness. *How to Raise an American* merits the time you can give it.

---

We are pleased to report that forty books were sent from the Children's Library to the children of New Orleans.

### **Books for New Orleans**

We will continue to collect children's books for New Orleans, and also musical instruments. Thank you for your donations to this worthy cause.



### **DOROTHY M. (KNOWLTON) WILSON**

Our thoughts and prayers go out to the family and friends of Dorothy M. (Knowlton) Wilson who passed away on April 8th. Her husband, Harold S. Wilson died in 1984. She leaves her son, Richard P. Wilson of Auburn; her sister, Marion F. MacMillan of Auburn, as well as many nieces and nephews. She was predeceased by her two brothers, Earl and Everett Knowlton, and by her sister, Mildred Bjork.

Dorothy was a long time member of First Congregational Church, and will be greatly missed.

Memorial Donations can be made to the First Congregational Church Sanctuary Renovation Fund, 128 Central Street, Auburn, MA 01501.

---

### **RUSSELL L. ROMKEY**

Our thoughts and prayers are also with the loved ones of Russell L. Romkey who passed away on Monday, April 16th. He was predeceased by his beloved wife, Ruth A. Romkey. He leaves a daughter, Elizabeth Swope of New Mexico, his son and daughter-in-law, Ralph and Patricia of E. Falmouth, 6 grandchildren, 10 great-grandchildren, his sister, Inez Dickie of Worcester, and many nieces and nephews. He is predeceased by his brother, Louis S. Romkey, Jr. and his sisters, Marjorie Nickerson and Jean Wilson. Russell lived in Auburn for 53 years before moving to E. Falmouth with his son Ralph's family.

Russell was a member of our church serving as a Deacon and Superintendent of Christian Education for many years, and will be sadly missed.

---

### **ROBERT ELLIS NORWOOD**

Please remember the loved ones of Robert E. Norwood in your prayers. Robert died on Thursday, April 19, 2007 after a brief illness. He leaves his wife of 63 years, Ruth (Wahlstrom); his son, Robert C. Norwood and his wife, Susan, of Framingham, his two daughters, Debra L. Nordberg and her husband, Paul, of Auburn, and Nancy A. Gray and her husband, Gregory, of Brooklin, Maine. He also leaves seven grandchildren and 4 great-grandchildren.

As a 48 year resident of Auburn, Robert was a member of our church and will surely be missed.

---

### **JOYCE MITCHELL**

Former, active member of First Congregational, Joyce Mitchell, passed away on March 30, 2007. She is survived by her two sons, Douglas and Robert Mitchell and a daughter, Lynn Perreault. Joyce had formerly lived in Auburn and then moved to the Cape several years ago. Please pray for her loved ones.

*“I am the resurrection and the Life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies.” John 11:25*

## Interfaith Hospitality Network



And if anyone gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones... he will certainly not lose his reward.  
Matthew 10:42

The First Congregational Church will host homeless families through the Interfaith Hospitality Network beginning Sunday, July 15th. An informational session/start

up meeting will be held on Thursday evening, May 10th at 7 pm.

We are in need of overnight chaperones, volunteers to prepare evening meals, volunteers to visit with our guests, miscellaneous items for snacks and lunches and/or small

monetary donations or gift cards to defray the weekly costs associated with the pro-

gram.

May 2007



May is American Stroke Month, Asthma & Allergy Awareness Month, Lyme Disease Awareness Month, Melanoma/Skin Disease Detection and Prevention Month, Mental Health Month, National Bike Month, National High Blood Pressure Education Month, National Osteoporosis Awareness and Prevention Month, and National Physical Fitness and Sports Month.

May 6th is High Blood Pressure Sunday. If you want your blood pressure checked, see me in Fellowship Hall after church. May 13-19 is National Women's Check-up Day. I have information available on most of these topics. If you need something and don't see it on the health table, please ask. I have a file cabinet with lots of information.

On Wednesday, April 25th, I am going to a meeting about Pandemic Preparedness and the Faith Community. One of the things that I already know is they want a disaster response taskforce within the faith community to make plans to respond to the potential effects of a pandemic crisis. If anyone is interested please let me know. By the time you read this, I will have been to the meeting, and I'll have more information to share.

The sun is out, so please be careful and use sunscreens. Bikers, PLEASE wear helmets!!!!

I pray that everyone has a safe and healthy spring.

God bless,

Debbie Pranaitis, RN



**Confirmation Sunday is May 6th at 10:00 a.m.**

## Prudential Committee

The Prudential Committee suggests that one of the ways you could donate to the Sanctuary Renovation Fund is to transfer stock to the Church's brokerage account. You would get the benefit of a tax deduction for the full value of the stock, plus avoid paying capital gains tax if the stock has appreciated in value since it was acquired.

Another way a donation could be affected (if you are 70 ½ years of age or older) is to transfer funds from an IRA directly to the Church's Sanctuary Fund. You avoid paying income taxes on the gift amount and the church receives the full transferred value. However, the donor cannot claim a charitable contribution.

If either method interests you and you want specifics, please contact Bob Luther or Dave Sampson.



*Our Work in Progress:*  
Nurturing Church Vitality

### Listening Process Leads to Recommendations

Our Work in Progress, our Massachusetts Conference UCC growth initiative, is making progress of its own! A series of listening sessions, designed to help us understand how to nurture local church vitality as well as the covenant among the churches, has been completed with recommendations based on this feedback submitted to our Board of Directors. Approximately 500 people participated in one of 33 listening sessions held around Massachusetts this past January. They were asked to respond to the following questions:

Based on 5 areas of vitality (Worship Attendance, Mission Outreach, Faith Formation, Stewardship & Connection to UCC) where do you want your church to be in 5 years? How can Conference resources be deployed to help your congregation get from where you are to where you expect to be in 5 years? Keeping in mind the resources of the Conference, how has the Conference blessed your ministry in the past? The Listening Steering Committee analyzed findings from these sessions. From there, they formed recommendations on key congregational needs and priorities which the Conference can champion to help our churches grow. They are:

#### Essential Ministry #1: Adult Faith Formation and Action

Our local churches want to grow in Christian faith and in attracting more people to attend worship and join their churches. They seek tools that will help them develop a more meaningful faith journey as well as transform the world in God's name. To this end, they would like the Conference to provide a full range of staff and program resources.

#### Essential Ministry #2: Conference Support in Times of Transition, Change and Conflict

Our local churches depend upon the Conference for expertise, guidance and staff presence at two crucial times: when faith communities face a change in pastoral leadership and when churches are in conflict or crisis. Strong professional support, leadership and resources are required, even more so than at other times.

#### Essential Ministry #3: Lay and Clergy Leadership Development

Our local churches thrive when gifted and spiritual, lay and clergy leaders are in place. The churches are asking the Conference to manage the process of identifying, supporting, training and nurturing those who will lead us in the years ahead. The UCC tradition is that leaders always come out of the pews at the local level. Once they begin that journey, the Conference can become a resource of depth to walk with them along the way.

#### Essential Ministry #4: Fostering Community and Connections Among Our Churches

Many of our churches and their leaders desire more connectedness, communication and collaboration among and between our faith communities. They look to the Conference to be the agent which brings them together, like the hub at the center of a wheel.

A dynamic group of committed UCC lay and clergy members from around the state came together to form the Listening Process Steering Committee. They were able to witness, firsthand, the meaning and resonance of our denomination and the important road God is unfolding ahead for us. In the words of Committee Chair, Rev. John Hudson, "Though at times the work was hard and the outcome unclear, Christ's spirit of community and joy bound us together and gave us all the tools we needed to get the work done. It is an exciting and challenging time to be the United Church of Christ in Massachusetts. Thank God!"

The Committee's findings and recommendations will be used, along with other research and analyses, to create an initial proposal for the direction of the Conference. Both will be presented at the Annual Meeting in June.

## FROM THE CHOIR ROOM:

### Hymn of the Month

(In honor of Memorial Day) the hymn of the month is *My Country, 'Tis of Thee* written by Samuel Smith, a native Bostonian born in 1808. Samuel attended Harvard and Andover Seminary, developing a lifelong passion for evangelism. He was inspired by the tune *America* (used in Great Britain for *God Save the Queen*) and wrote his own patriotic hymn within half an hour. *My Country* was first sung at Boston's Park Street Congregational Church.



### Thank You!

The choir would like to thank everyone who has donated CD players and office supplies. Your generosity is greatly appreciated!!

### Parade News

Please come and support your choir at the town of Auburn's Memorial Day Parade on May 28th! The choir will be representing the church with three anthems:

- *Seek Ye First*
- *Lord, I Lift Your Name on High*
- *The Battle Hymn of the Republic*

(In case of rain, we will not be able to participate due to the sound equipment.)

- The choir has plans to make a CD next year. This year's Christmas Cantata (2007) will be recorded live, and 6-8 anthems will be recorded in January. The CD will be made available to shut-ins, and used to represent our church. We are in the process of fundraising and are looking for fresh ideas. If you have any suggestions, please let Heather know.
- June 3 is Choir Recognition Day. For this special day we will try something we've never done—singing with a soundtrack. The anthem *Goin' Up to the Mountain* is written by William Rose, based on Mark 9:2 -8. He calls it a "Transfiguration Anthem" for SATB (4 voices) with descant. It has a decided gospel feel and is difficult to sing without wanting to clap along!
- Joyful Noyse will also sing with soundtrack for Children's Sunday on May 20th. We *Have Gathered Here* is a Latin American praise song based on Psalm 92:1,2.

## FROM THE CHOIR ROOM: Continued...

Recently, I came across John Wesley's rules of singing reproduced in 1964 and 1988 in the United Methodist hymnals. Some rules are written below:

- I. *Sing All* . . . "Even those tired or poor of voice. Those who refuse to sing withdraw themselves from the communion of those gathered in worship."
- II. *Sing Lustily and with Good Courage*
- III. *Sing in Time*
- IV. *Above all, Sing Spiritually*

"Have an Eye to God in every word you sing"

Blessings,

Heather Moore  
Minister of Music

"I will sing to the Lord, for he has triumphed gloriously. . . The Lord is my strength and my song."  
Exodus 15:1-2



**Joyful Noyse Rehearsal Schedule**

5/6, 5/13	11:15 AM rehearsal
5/20	Joyful Noyse Recognition 9:15 AM rehearsal (pieces to be announced)



### CHURCH CAMPING WEEKEND

This year's Camping Weekend will be June 22<sup>nd</sup> to June 24<sup>th</sup>. Once again, we will be returning to Oak Haven Family Campground in Wales, MA. If you would like to spend a weekend relaxing and having fun with members and friends from First Congregational Church, please contact Lori Stockhaus at 508-865-6439 and let her know you may be interested.



### The 26<sup>th</sup> General Synod

The 26<sup>th</sup> 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 (\$50) in advance. (Sunday's 3 p.m. worship service is free.) It is the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration of the U.C.C.

If you are aware of any graduates (college, technical school, high school, etc.) please contact the office (508) 832-2845, as we would like to acknowledge them in an upcoming bulletin and next month's *Tidings*.



*TIDINGS is a monthly publication of*

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

Phone: (508)832-2845

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



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

May 2007						
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		