



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 BOARD OF TRUSTEES

The Board of Trustees is pleased to announce that after two years of planning we are now anxious and ready to start the renovation of our sanctuary. Many thanks to all whose input, support and enthusiasm brought about a near unanimous vote on March 9th to approve the final design of the altar area. With this last issue put to rest, we will commence the sanctuary renovation project on June 9th. We hope to be finished by the time school opens again in the month of September.

One of our missions is to include the congregation when we can during certain stages so that all who wish may play a role in the physical portion of this renovation. The major components of the project will be handled and completed by hired professionals. However, there will be many other tasks that we are capable of doing ourselves to save some costs. We plan to take full advantage of that. So please be watchful for announcements in church where you will have that rewarding opportunity to lend a hand in this most worthy project.

Sometime in May we will be posting in the church a project schedule outlining the timeline of events planned for the next few months. We encourage the congregation to be mindful of this project and try to set aside some time in this schedule where you think you can play a part in its completion. In the spirit of fellowship we look forward to your participation.

The renovation subcommittee is comprised of the following members of the Board of Trustees:

Bob Murray, Dave Sampson, Bob Johnson, Wayne Prouty, and Paul Gemme.

One of the things that we would like to do for the record and history of the church is to chronicle this historic event (it's been 44 years since this last happened). If you have a good digital camera we need some pictures of the sanctuary before, during, and after the renovation is completed. Please contact one of the members listed above if you can help with this or any other task.

On another note, the golf tournament will take place at Pine Ridge Country Club in Oxford on Saturday, September 13, 2008 at 1 pm. We are in need of golfers and sponsors for this fun-filled event. Proceeds once again will go towards our annual budget.

And finally, the retirement celebration of Rev. Knox on April 13th was a solemn, yet heartwarming event that we will all not soon forget. The Board of Trustees, both past and present, owes a great debt of thanks and gratitude for his 23 years of selfless service, commitment and dedication to this church and its congregation. Ken will be sorely missed as we move forward with the daunting task of finding his replacement. His shoes will be difficult ones to fill!

We shall be forever thankful for the wisdom, guidance and council he has provided for this board throughout his tenure. His leadership by example was always as a servant of God following in Christ's footsteps. There will always be a lasting impression and a warm place reserved in our hearts for the legacy he left behind.

On behalf of the Board of Trustees we wish you and your family a most wonderful and blessed, well deserved retirement. We pray that God will continue to bestow His blessings and shine His grace upon you as the next chapter of your life unfolds. From the bottom of our hearts,
THANK YOU Rev. Dr. Kenneth E. Knox.

Celebrating their anniversary
 on May 4th is:
 Bob & Carole Murray
 Happy Anniversary!



On Sunday, April 6th, we celebrated the baptisms of Samantha Claire Prouty and Brady Warren Johnson.

Samantha is the daughter of Eric and Mary Ann Prouty and granddaughter to Wayne and Joyce Prouty.

Brady's parents are Scott and Nicole Johnson. His grandparents are Wil and Nan Johnson.

On April 20th we celebrated the baptism of Cole Gregory Pattee. He's the son of Grant and Emily Pattee.

Congratulations to the families, may you continue to encourage Samantha, Brady and Cole in their spiritual journeys.



Help Wanted

Grandmother looking for experienced, responsible person to help with housecleaning duties. Home is located in Auburn. Offering a flexible schedule, and pay is negotiable. For details please call Jane at 508-832-5853.

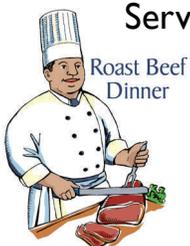
Our next church supper is planned for Saturday, May 17th, at 5:00 p.m.

Please note the price change :

Adults \$10

Children (under 10) \$5

Servers: Trustees



Hope to see you there!

A Note of Thanks from the Church Sexton

A special thank-you to Dave Sampson and Wayne Prouty for all the "special projects" they are so willing to help with in maintaining the church building.

News from Outreach

The Outreach Committee continues to save towards the purchase of an ark. We have seeds for the taking. We ask that when you reap the harvest, bring some of your vegetables and/or flowers to church for others. We will ask only for a goodwill donation and that money will go into our Ark Fund. You will get free seeds and some of the extra vegetables can be for others who don't garden. We hope that this can be enjoyed by many church members. We thank all who participate. Look for the free seeds available soon.

Thank you from the Outreach Committee.

Debbie Pranaitis
Outreach Chairman

Remember Our Troops

We are sending packages to Iraq at the beginning of every month, so please continue to collect items. Suggestions include dried soup and veggies (no cans), microwaveable items in plastic containers, candy, cookies (not homemade as it takes a few weeks to get there) easy mac 'n cheese, pudding cups that don't need refrigeration, etc.

If you'd like to help, please see Diane Moore or Avis Britton for more information, and thank you for supporting our troops.

Coffee Hour Hosts

- 5/4 ~ Personnel Relations
- 5/11 ~ Prudential Committee
- 5/18, 5/25 ~ Library
- 6/1 ~ BOCE
- 6/8 ~ Prudential Committee
- 6/15 ~ Stewardship Committee
- 6/22, 6/29 ~ Historians/Memorial Committees

Interfaith Hospitality Network

The First Congregational Church will host homeless families through the Interfaith Hospitality Network beginning Sunday, July 13th through July 20th. An informational session/start up meeting will be held on Thursday evening, May 22nd 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 program.

Thank you for any assistance you may be able to give these homeless families.

Pat and Alyse Bu-

koski



And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

Colossians 3:17



May is American Stroke Month, Better Sleep Month, Healthy Vision Month, Asthma and Allergy Awareness Month, Clean Air Month, Hepatitis Awareness Month, Lupus Awareness Month, Lyme Disease Awareness Month, Melanoma/Skin Cancer Detection and Prevention Month, Mental Health Month, National Arthritis Month, National High Blood Pressure Education Month, and Ultraviolet Awareness Month. May 1-7 is National Physical Education and Sport Week. May 4-11 is North American Occupational Safety and Health Week. I will have information on these topics on the Health Table in Fellowship Hall.

There is a notice on the Bulletin Board in Fellowship Hall regarding becoming a hospice or a pediatric palliative care volunteer. The training sessions will include 2 Saturdays, May 31 and June 7 and the evening of June 11 at 650 Lincoln St. Worcester. For more information or an application call Kathy Drew, Volunteer Coordinator, UMass Memorial Hospice (508)754-0052 ext. 3057.

Recently I have had questions regarding medical supplies that really aren't appropriate for THE closet that is at the end of our educational wing. I have suggested that these items be donated to one of the free health clinics. One of the items was a glucometer, used to measure a person's blood sugar. This would be very helpful at a free clinic.

I would like to offer more informative sessions for those that might be interested. One that has been suggested is someone to come and talk to us about financial planning. If anyone has any suggestions, please let me know. I'd like to start in September. It could be on a Saturday afternoon before our September church supper. Please let me know if there are any topics that you'd like to have presented at the church.

As the weather gets nicer, please be aware of the sun! Use sunscreen and protect your eyes as well.

God Bless!
Deborah Pranaitis
Parish Nurse

There is a terrific opportunity for all Christians (that means you and all those in your congregation who will receive rebates) to use some or all of the unexpected windfall in the form of tax rebate checks to be mailed out in May in the service of God's kingdom!

Your refund spent by the Church in the form of salaries, supplies, and local mission giving will stimulate the economy just as well as buying that new TV or iPhone you don't really need.

Remember, You will be enriched in every way for your great generosity (2 Cor. 9:11).

Here We Grow Preschool



With the month of May rapidly approaching, we find ourselves preparing for the end of another successful school year. The 4-year-old classes will be visiting Mary D. Stone School for a tour of the kindergarten classrooms. Our goal is to help them be at ease with the upcoming transition into kindergarten, wherever that may be.

During the month of April we were fortunate to have Officer O'Brien from the Auburn Police Department at school to fingerprint all 4-year-old children. We then gave all fingerprints to the parents, hoping that they will never have the need to use them. He did a super job, speaking with each child and helping them to be relaxed.

With the nice weather upon us, we are spending more time on the outdoor playground. Thank you to Wayne Prouty for cleaning up the playground and to the Pranaitis family for rototilling the mulch and pea stone.

Our Department of Early Education and Care was here for licensing. Every two years we get a scheduled visit. Martha Vigeant spent the day in the classrooms and office. We had a few minor non-compliances which have already been taken care of. Once again we asked her for any suggestions to improve the program and she was more than willing to give some thoughts. For the next two years we are set with DEEC, and the following three years we are set with NAEYC. Yippee!

This year the 2-day classes will be visiting Noodle Noggin N' Bean for their end-of-year field trip. The 3-day classes will be visiting Giguere's Gym. This is new to us, so wish us well. We will be traveling by bus provided by AA Transportation.

Closing out the school year will be the 3-year-olds' graduation, the 4-year-olds graduations and Spree Day for all. This is our busiest time of the year, but a very rewarding time of year as well. Some families will be leaving HWG for good, some for the summer and some with a year or two off until the younger siblings are of age to come to HWG. Yes, I have already started a wait list for the year '09-'10. Whatever each family is doing, it is a time for goodbyes and good lucks. We will miss each and every one of them.

Once again some of the staff will be returning for the last two weeks of June to work the summer program. Themes this year are "Under the Sea" and "Olympic Games." If you know of anyone looking for a summer program, send them our way. Thanks. HWG will close on June 27th for the summer and return late in August.

At this time I would like to thank and wish good luck to Anne Coyne, who will be leaving the HWG family to look for full time employment. Anne has been a valuable asset to HWG, and will be hard to replace. SO Anne, Best of Luck and we will MISS you!

In closing, the entire staff and families of **Here We Grow** wish Rev. Knox and Jackie a wonderful retirement.

Until next month, enjoy Spring.

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

LIBRARY TIDINGS
MAY 2008

A thousand thanks to committee member Jean McPherson who obtained boxes in which we'll be packing Adult Library books beginning Saturday, June 7, 2008. All bookcases and other pertinent library furnishings will be removed from the sanctuary soon afterward.

How to Enjoy Adult Library books during the Sanctuary Renovation (save for referral)

The Children's Library, at the end of the downstairs hallway, will be open every Sunday during the summer. Some shelving space on the outside wall of the room will be reserved for Adult Library books. Church services will be held in the vestry so both facilities are on the same floor.

Meanwhile, a few revisions and guidelines since the April *Tidings*:

While still available in the sanctuary, individuals may borrow up to 15 books at one time for the summer or until the library is back in place (want more?, speak to a librarian). "Transport" bags are in the bottom drawer of the library stand. They're for you to use.

Any books borrowed before renovations begin may be returned afterward in the Children's Library. A designated area will be marked for returns OR, if the library is closed, returns can be put in the bag on the Children's Library door.

Adult books borrowed from those in the Children's Library will be signed out in the same way as always. The card holder will be close by.

We're hoping to keep old and new readers busy this summer. However, if you run into a problem, be sure to contact one of us, or Denise, who is superb in keeping us informed.

Gloria Whitehead (508) 434-2700

Charlotte Steffen (508) 832-4530

Debbie Pranaitis (508) 248-7048

Jean McPherson (508) 832-5677

If Charlie Rose is among PBS programs that you enjoy watching, you may have seen him recently reviewing David McCullough writings with him. History and painting/art had always intrigued McCullough. He never ceased to learn with fascination, as he wrote books about Theodore Roosevelt, Harry Truman, and John Adams, to mention just three, whose lives intertwined with history. When asked what his favorite book was among the many he'd written, McCullough replied 1776. It will be available in the Children's Library this summer.

With Tibet and the Dalai Lama (generally a happy man) in the news so frequently, you might like to read this book, The Art of Happiness, by Howard C. Cutler, M.D. who has been a diplomat of the American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology and co-authored the book with the Dalai Lama. They met in 1982 while Cutler was visiting India on a research grant to study Tibetan medicine. This inspirational book (10) will also move to the Children's Library.

Golfing with God - A Novel of Heaven and Earth by Roland Merullo. Can you picture yourself with the name "Hank," in heaven, and assigned to a game of golf with God one morning? Seems God is having trouble with his game. Hank was a bit surprised in the first place that he was in heaven because a fair percentage of golfers never make it and he'd been no angel on earth. As a former pro, his talent to fix God's case of "the yipe" on heavenly courses was no problem. To his surprise, Hank slowly realizes that he's the one getting the lesson about all of life's problems and challenges and how, swing by swing, life can be improved.

Many thanks to whomever gave this book to the Adult Library. However, we still prefer that donors identify themselves. We'll always omit an identifying name plate if requested.

YOM and Confirmation News

I would like to say thank you to Mike Schillinger, the Board of Ed and my husband, Randy, for all your kind words and flowers on confirmation Sunday. It was a lovely surprise for Mom and me. I've always said working with the youth is a labor of love and I am praying really hard that someone will step up to the plate and be a confirmation teacher next fall.

The youth finished their confirmation requirements with part II of the urban immersion just a day before confirmation. We visited AIDS Project Worcester, Jeremiah's Inn and Aldersgate Church. This was a GREAT confirmation class and I look forward to seeing all of the confirmands in Youth On a Mission.

***IMPORTANT – Confirmands and their parents are reminded that candle lighting duties continue through June. The deacons have their hands full during this very transitional time in our church. The candle lighting should be one less thing they have to worry about.*

Although I was disappointed in the turn out for our annual auction on April 6th, we were still able to raise approximately \$5,700 with the auction and some additional cash donations. A huge thank you to those who came, to Todd and Ronnie for a delicious meal, to the YOM members and their parents for venturing out there and getting the donations and the hard work they put in setting up and cleaning up for the auction. It was a huge team effort that no one person could have handled.

We are still about \$2,500 short of our original \$10,000 goal. The kids have a couple of FUNdraisers coming up that I'm hoping everyone will take part in so please mark your calendars. Saturday, June 14th, at the Auburn Fire Station we'll be having a car wash, cookies, and lemonade sale. Friday, July 4th, during the town-wide celebration we'll be holding our second annual Whack -a-Car. Specific details will follow on both.

Also, I'm hoping to be making a summer trip to Camp Berea. The weekend is August 22nd – 24th. I know everyone has busy summers planned and high school sports will be kicking in BUT... the speaker is Sam Bhatt that weekend. We've heard Sam speak on a prior trip to Berea and he's fantastic! After doing DEEP FREEZE in January the kids mentioned that they'd like to try some of the summer activities that Berea has to offer. I'll be getting the sign-up sheets out VERY shortly. Anyone who has completed confirmation class and/or is in high school is eligible to go.

God Bless,

Jennifer Bohn



CHURCH CAMPING WEEKEND

This year's Camping Weekend will be June 27th & 28th. 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.



Managing through Change.... MISSION: POSSIBLE

This is our stewardship theme for 2008. Throughout the coming year, as we undergo the many changes within First Congregational Church of Auburn - our Leadership, the physical changes of our building and also spiritually within ourselves - we have to know that with God all things are possible. We will rise victorious through the many challenges in the months ahead.

We are reminded of Christ's last words: "Remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age." (Mt 28:20) Christ is indeed our eternal companion. His promise is to walk and talk with us throughout all of our lives; a promise which we can always rely on. This means that throughout the challenges we face in these upcoming months He will be there with us, beside us, helping us manage, individually and as a congregation, a team. We need to be strong but also know that when we are feeling weak, God is there with us.

An article in the May issue of Stewardship titled "Walking with Jesus" reminds us that St. Paul told the Christians in Ephesus that Christians are "created in Christ Jesus for good works." (Eph. 2:10) "Good works" has to do with Stewardship. That is, using our minds, our strength, our talents, our resources to serve our Lord and Savior daily. That is a big order, so remember that we have our eternal Companion who stands ready to help us in our "good works" for the Kingdom of God. Surely, we would not want to fail our Lord in that endeavor.

Please keep this prayer in your hearts and minds through the upcoming months:

Loving Creator, the challenges before us seem enormous as we strive to serve you. Help us to remember that we can courageously meet every test through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

In His Love,

Michele Schillinger, Chairman of the Stewardship Committee



Choir News

The First Church Choir will be making a CD on May 17th. This will consist of 30-40 minutes of music carefully selected from our wealth of anthems. Anthems were chosen based on choral sound, message, and stylistic variety. The choir and Music Committee have been fundraising for 18 months to pay for the cost of 15 CD's to be given to our shut-ins. We will continue with our bake sale fundraisers in order to supplement our outreach effort. Our next bake sale is scheduled for May 18th during coffee hour.

Anyone interested in checking out the studio responsible for the recording can log onto this website: www.studioteo.com

Joyful Noyse will present 2 anthems on June 1st:

We're Building a Circle of Love and
What a Beautiful Day.

Both anthems are from *Glory Sand* and are wonderfully accessible for both children and adults.

God Gave Music . . .

to encourage His children and lift hearts toward Him
to celebrate the gift of His Son and the joy it brings
to help you grow ever closer to Him and His love

Blessings,
Heather Moore
Minister of Music

JOYFUL NOYSE REHEARSAL SCHEDULE:

May 4, 11, 18 & 25	11:15 a.m.
June 1	9:15 a.m.

Joyful Noyse Recognition
We're Building a Circle of Love
What a Beautiful Day

LEDGER
1773-1786

A few years ago I read and copied a ledger that was stored in the town hall basement. I don't believe this book has been read in the last two hundred years. It is a complete record of the step-by-step decisions made by our men in building our meetinghouse and forming our town. I will be sharing some of the interesting excerpts from these writings with you below and in subsequent *Tidings*.

Enjoy—

George DuHamel
Church Historian

In Council June 19, 1773 ordered that Gershom, Israel Stevens, David Bancroft, Jonathan Stone, Daniel Boyden, Jacob Stephens, Thomas Drury, Thomas Drury, Jr., Henry Gale, William Bancroft, James Nichols, Davins Boyden, James Hart, Thomas Baird, James Hart, Jr., Thomas Baird, Jr., Oliver Curtis, Comfort Rice, Elizabeth Boyden, Phoebe Bancroft, John Boyden, Daniel Bancroft, Charles Hart, and Peter Boyden of Worcester, Benjamin Carter, Charles Richardson, Timothy Carter, Phinehas Rice, Benjamin Carter, Jr., Rachel Buck, Daniel Roper, Gershom Bigelow, Gershom Bigelow, Jr., Peter Hardy, Daniel Cummings, Charles Richardson, Jr., of Sutton, Peter Jeneson, Ruth Stone, Jesse Stone, James Pratt, Abraham Fitts, Alexander Nichols, David Gleason of Oxford, John Crowl, Jr., Andrew Crowl, Jonathan Phillips, John Hart, Thomas Scott, William Young, Jonathan Stone of Leicester be and hereby are with their families and estates, erected into a precinct and shall enjoy all the power and privileges which other precincts in this province by law enjoy - and it is further ordered that all other persons (with their families and estates) living in the Towns of Worcester, Leicester, Oxford, not further than three miles as the roads are now trod, from the place herein after fixed for building the meetinghouse upon, together with all such others in Sutton that live not further than one mile and a half from said place, who shall signify their desire to belong to said precinct by lodging their names in the Secretary's office within nine months from this date, be and hereby are Incorporated and made a part of the precinct aforesaid - ordered that the spot for erecting the meetinghouse upon be at the following place (viz) at an oak stump with stones upon it, standing on the westerly side of the County Road leading from Worcester to Oxford, near the center of two acres of land which Thomas Drury, conveyed to Jonathan Stone, Daniel Boyden and David Bancroft, the said two acres of land lieth in a gore of land that was annexed to the Town of Worcester.

Sent down for consideration.

Thomas Fluker, Sect'y
In the House of Represent'. June 23, 1773

J. Chasling, Spk.

Consented to

J. Hutchinson

A true copy

Attest. Thomas Fluker, Sect'y

The excerpt below was taken from a 2007 article by Richard Sparrow

The majority of those who prepared for ministry in the Evangelical and Reformed Church and the Congregational Christian Churches in 1957 were raised in their denominations, went to denominationally-related seminaries and graduated in three years with little or no debt. Most were young, male, understood the history, theology, and polity of their denomination, and were expecting to serve in parish ministry. Of the few women who attended, most were planning to serve as Christian educators. Also of significance, the churches from which the students came and the congregations they were called to serve were knowledgeable of and committed to the mission and ministry of their denominations.

Within two generations, now most of our seminarians come from denominational backgrounds other than the United Church of Christ, with a number having little church orientation. There are more women than men and more seeking second rather than first careers. Many students attend theological and graduate schools outside of the seven seminaries of the United Church of Christ, commute from their homes, are enrolled in degree programs that may well take them eight years, and graduate with indebtedness as high as \$40,000. All represent a diversity of culture that reflects the multi-racial, multi-cultural landscape of the UCC today. Many are seeking to further or deepen their understanding of theology, rather than pursue a call to a form of authorized ministry. Those who do serve in the parish setting will be serving churches that have less knowledge of and commitment to the United Church of Christ than was true of their predecessors in ministry two generations earlier.

Did you know . . .

New England 2006
Weekly Church Attendance
% of population

CT: 14.7%
MA: 12.3%
ME: 9.7%
NH: 9.6%
RI: 16.9%
VT: 11.8%

Source: Vision New England



EQUAL EXCHANGE COFFEE

We will begin selling equal exchange coffee during Coffee Hour on Sundays starting in May. The cost will still be \$6 a bag.

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

Calling All Graduates

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

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Phone: (508)832-2845

Web: auburnfirstucc.org



BULK RATE
U.S. POSTAGE
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Auburn, Mass

May 2008

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