



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!'"

Departure



My last scheduled Sunday with you is May 29th. Some will think of this as *Memorial Day weekend*. But as the calendar of the Church would have it, this is the Sunday before *Ascension Day*.

So it seems that my last Sunday with you will coincide with *the Ascension of Christ* to glory, to sit at the right hand of the Father. That seems a bit daunting. I am, for the most part, just a regular guy - a foot soldier in the army of the Lord.

Even so, I do not refuse a touch of glory for my departure. We have been on a blessed journey for this past year, and now it comes to an end. You have a Pastor Candidate, and with his Call and settlement my work as your Interim is done. It has been a splendid ride.

A parting always brings grief, as well as the promise of what is new. I shall miss you.

Isaac Watts' great paraphrase of Psalm 90 is often sung at funerals to celebrate both the gift of life and the promise of faith beyond mortal death: *O God, our help in ages past, our hope for years to come, our shelter from the stormy blast, and our eternal home . . .*

I thank you for the time you have given me and the love you have shown me. The Lord has blessed me here, and I pray that you, too, have been likewise blessed. I shall continue to keep you in prayer for this next chapter of your life in Christ. I leave a better person for having been here. The grace of our Lord be with you.

Pastor Duke

DATES TO REMEMBER

- | | |
|----------|--|
| May 1st | Communion Sunday with Deacons offering & food pantry |
| May 8th | Mother's Day
Confirmation Class' Candy Sale after worship |
| May 18th | Spirit Supper 6 p.m. |
| May 21st | Community Church Supper 5 p.m.
Spaghetti Supper Fundraiser at 6:30 p.m. |
| May 22nd | Worcester Fellowship following worship |
| May 29th | A fond farewell to Pastor Duke |
| June 1st | Our heartfelt welcome to Pastor Brian and his wife, Jenney |





Carole & Bob Murray will be celebrating their special day on May 4th.

ELECTRONIC TIDINGS

Have you considered signing up to receive the *Tidings* online? We currently mail almost 300 newsletters each month. We only need 200 parcels of mail to take advantage of the bulk mailing special rate. The newsletter is saved in an 8½ x 11 format for easy printing. Why not try it for a month? You can always switch back if you decide that you prefer the "snail mail" method of delivery.

Coffee Hour Hosts

5/1, 5/8	Prudential	5/15	B.O.C.E.
5/22, 5/29	Deacons	6/5	Stewardship



Joyful Noyse Schedule

5/1, 5/8, 5/15, 5/22	11:15 a.m. rehearsal
5/29	9:15 a.m. rehearsal

Massachusetts Conference, United Church of Christ

212th ANNUAL MEETING ~ June 18, 2011

Sturbridge Host Hotel & Conference Center, Sturbridge, Massachusetts

Changing Lives

The theme of this year's Annual Meeting: Changing Lives "So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation" based on II Corinthians 5:17. This passage encourages our deep commitment to the community of the United Church of Christ; excellence & transformational leadership in the work we do locally and collectively in the name of Jesus Christ.

Once again, this year our meeting will be one day filled with opportunity for talking together, sharing a meal together, doing business and filling our spirits with worship. The Annual Meeting Planning Committee, along with the Board of Directors, has made a commitment to keep the Annual Meeting both financially accessible and faithful to the business of the MA Conference of the United Church of Christ. The cost this year reflects a \$10 savings over last year's rate.

The Rev. Geoffrey A. Black, General Minister and President UCC, will be with us keynoting and leading us in communion. It is wonderful that Rev. Black is able to be with us celebrating our wider United Church of Christ community and our Communion in Christ. Pastor of Church of Christ in Millis and Stand-Up Comedian, The Rev. Jennifer Munroe-Nathans, will stoke our spirits with laughter. The band BFJ from West Brookfield, UCC will lead us in song.

I look forward to seeing you in Sturbridge on June 18th.

Nancy Lawrence, Chairperson
Annual Meeting Planning Committee

Register for the annual meeting online at macucc.org.
(Registration forms are also available in the church office.)
Deadline to register is June 3rd.

Stewardship Message

Small Gifts Count

"...and whoever gives even a cup of cold water..." Matthew 10:42

Recently I spent several hours as a patient in the emergency room of a city hospital. I was not in imminent danger of death and I did not come to the hospital in an ambulance, so I ranked fairly low on the priority list of the medical staff, and rightly so. I was, however, in some considerable pain as my tear-streaked face made clear to all who passed. No cubicles were available to me, so I sat on a gurney in a busy hallway watching the staff pass me by for several hours before I received pain medication.

Needless to say, I've had better nights. In the midst of the painful waiting, however, God showed up in the person of a young woman, an EMT by the badge on her jacket. She probably brought someone to the ER in her ambulance and was now walking through my hallway on the way out. She undoubtedly had much on her mind and important work to do. But she saw the pain in my face, and though she did not work in the ER, she took a moment to stop and ask me if I was going to be all right. She told me to hold on, that someone would help me. She gently touched my shoulder and looked in my eyes. She made a difference with a small gift: a touch, a word of comfort. Small gifts count!

Rochelle A. Stackhouse is the Senior Minister of The Church of the Redeemer, UCC, New Haven, Connecticut.

May 2011



This resource is a free service and is made possible by your gifts to Our Church's Wider Mission.

The Confirmation Class will be having a candy sale during coffee hour on **Mother's Day, Sunday, May 8th**, It will be a great opportunity to pick up some sweets to surprise your mom!



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

FIRE ALARM FUND

As many of you know, the church was completely destroyed by fire in 1896. We have therefore started a Fire Alarm fund to save up money to outfit the church with a fire alarm system. We have already received a \$10,000 anonymous donation to start funding this system, and anticipate we will need an additional \$25,000. If you would like to contribute, please write "Fire Alarm" on your donation. Thank you!

CRADLE ROLL

5/1 Jennifer Bohn

5/8 Rich McPherson & Lillian McPherson

5/15 Eric Cove & Steven Cariglio

5/22 Carole Murray & Andrew Gemme

FRIENDLY REMINDER TO ALL PARENTS:
Cradle Roll coverage begins at 9:45 a.m.

BACK TO HAITI

As you may or may not know, Randy and I will be returning to Haiti this fall (October 3rd – 12th). We will be traveling with Monadnock Bible Conference again, but this time we will be part of a medical mission that provides free medical care to the people of Haiti. In Haiti you have to pay "up front" for any medical care. The clinics provided by MBC may be the only care these people receive. It is also quite common for collections to be taken from the missions team to provide for surgical procedures that can not be performed by the clinics themselves such as hernias, abscesses and other more in depth treatments. We will also be spending some time with the orphans from Redeemer's Child Orphanage and checking out the progress on the new orphanage we broke ground on last November.

"MBC ministries, are mercy and compassion based but do not diminish or lack the power of the gospel. At MBC we see it as counterintuitive and disingenuous to see a brother or sister in need and say, 'Go, I wish you well. Keep warm and well fed' and yet do nothing about it. The Haitians have a proverb; 'sak vid pa kanpe' an empty sack doesn't stand up, meaning a hungry person can't do anything. This person is so overwhelmed by their condition that words are seldom heard, but actions are understood. As we meet physical needs (hunger, thirst, naked, sick . . .) we have the opportunity to speak to spiritual needs in Jesus' name."

As the time for our trip draws closer, we *may* take up a collection for some over the counter medications and such, but right now what we really need is our church's help to get there. The Outreach Committee has generously donated \$500 for our trip deposits, but we still need to raise a minimum of another \$2200 (maybe more depending on what the on going crisis in the Mid East does to gas prices and therefore air-fare). We are so grateful for your ongoing support and love.

In His Service,
Jennifer & Randy





From **Here We Grow** Preschool

With the month of May here, we are preparing for the end of our 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.

We have been fortunate to have had the Auburn Police, Massachusetts State Police, and Members of the Amber Alert team, Auburn Fire, and Auburn Children's Librarian visit HWG this year. Thank you to all community groups for their continued support.

With the nice weather upon us, we are spending more time in the outdoor playground. Thank you to Wayne Prouty for cleaning up the playground.

This year the 2-day classes will be visiting Stowe Farm for their end-of-year field trip. The 3-day and 5-day classes will be visiting Discovery Museum in Acton and will be traveling by bus provided by AA Transportation. Both trips are usually full of fun and exploration.

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 also. 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 back. Yes, I have already started a wait list for the year '12/'13. Whatever each family is doing, it is a time for goodbyes. We will miss each and every one of you.

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, Wild, Wild West and Lost in Space. If you know of anyone looking for a summer program, please send them our way. HWG will close on July 1st for the summer and will return late in August.

At this time the entire staff would like to wish Mrs. Derenas, Mrs. Leonard, Mrs. Marhefka, Mrs. Nelson and Mrs. Whitley the best as they venture off to new experiences. I'll keep you informed as to the new staff and any other changes that may come our way.

Until next month, enjoy Spring.

Dawn Murphy

Director

Here We Grow Preschool

Library Tidings
by Gloria Whitehead



Whether we are longtime Christians struggling with the temptations and stress of today's world or new believers reaching out for the first time to Christ to transform our lives, this book can point us to the secrets for living happier, more meaningful lives. How does the title, "Living the Extraordinary Life" strike you? Is the pace of life's treadmill too fast for you? – Yes? – That's a common answer and author and Pastor, Dr. Charles Stanley, may be renowned in his field, but he is fast to agree that life can bring you to an abyss – that you can experience a descent from a spiritual mountain peak to a pit which lacks an escape. The mental visions he shares in this book are gems fostered by extensive study of the Scriptures and then put through "tests on earth."

To quote the Pastor, "Throughout my life I have come to understand one thing clearly: only God can help you to live a truly extraordinary life."

From personal experience, biblical personalities and true case studies, Dr. Stanley shows how nine (9) life principles he references in the book will guide our souls in this confused age. Every chapter contains useful help such as prayers and questions which will serve as a guide in journaling daily progress from weakness to strength, from desperation to confidence in God's power and love. Using the following of life's principles, we can

- a.) Find out how we can replace fear with faith
- b.) Learn the power packed secret of waiting on God
- c.) Discover that discouragement is a choice
- d.) Access God's power to cope when our stamina is gone.

Just what is this extraordinary life God calls us to enjoy? It's a life that cannot be waived by inner sorrows or disappointments. As defined by Dr. Stanley, it is "a life sustained by inner peace and joy in the good times and the bad. He further thinks that "God wants us to experience fulfillment." That God created us for excellence and from His perspective, our lives present infinite possibilities. No matter how many wrong turns we take, God knows how to redirect our lives and set us back on the right track. That's what "Living the Extraordinary Life" is all about. It is a revelation of renewed hope for all who have almost run out of strength and faith. It's a stabilizing and confidence-building message for those of us who live in uncertain times.

Dr. Stanley has been Pastor of a large Baptist Church in Georgia and head of the International In Touch Ministries, including his *In Touch* radio and television programs.

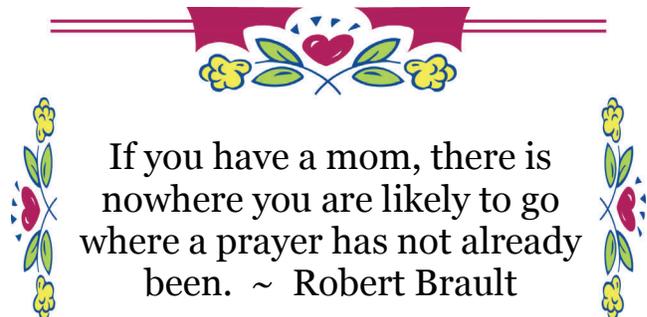
The Congregation is grateful to Shirley Jacobs for gifting this book to our Church Library.

POTLUCK SUPPER & FELLOWSHIP

Come, as we gather at the church for
"Spirit Suppers" for an informal,
potluck meal on Wednesday,

May 18th, at 6 PM.

All-ages are invited to attend.



If you have a mom, there is
nowhere you are likely to go
where a prayer has not already
been. ~ Robert Brault

Mothers
Day

FROM THE OUTREACH COMMITTEE

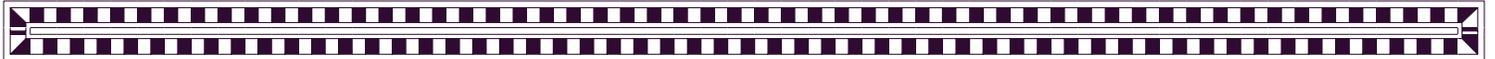
Thank you church members for your generous contribution of love and support for the Japan Earthquake and Tsunami Church World Emergency Appeal. Monies raised during the special church offering brought in \$353.00.

Please mark your calendars and join us on **Sunday, May 22nd** as we gather with Worcester Fellowship on Worcester Common to share food and worship with all in attendance. We'll be making sandwiches and packing up snacks in the downstairs kitchen area at 9:00 AM before service and leaving from church before noon. ALL are welcome to join us and break bread together in an atmosphere where there's no distinction between those with homes and those without.

REQUEST: One of the gifts we'll bring on 5/22/11, are white socks for men, women and children in sizes large and medium. T-shirts are welcome, but will be collected and distributed by the coordinators at a different time. The distribution of socks is always appreciated and the quantity has been plentiful thus far so that every person has an opportunity to receive a pair or two. If you'd like to donate socks and/or T-shirts (or money for these items, prior to 5/22), please see one of the Outreach members.

For many years during a week in summer (typically the 3rd full week in July), through the Interfaith Hospitality Network (IHN), the First Congregational Church in Auburn, has hosted homeless families for one week as they move from church to church throughout the year. Since we were not able this year to find a volunteer to organize hosting this project, IHN was notified that our church would not be participating in 2011. Even though we've made the decision to skip this year, we will try planning again in 2012.

In Love, Hope, Peace, Understanding and Generosity,
Outreach Members: Pat Bukoski, Sue Campbell, Judy Murphy, Deb Pranaitis & Sue MacPhee



SPAGHETTI SUPPER FUNDRAISER

As many of you know already, Tori Stockhaus and Devon Orcutt have been selected, interviewed and accepted to participate in the People to People Student Ambassador program and will be traveling to Australia for three weeks this July. 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 \$7,339 which includes all transportation, accommodations, meals, educational activities and insurance. To help offset the cost, we are having a spaghetti supper fundraiser **on May 21st here at the First Congregational Church in Auburn** starting at 6:30 p.m. The tickets are \$15 for adults and \$6 for kids 12 and under. Following the dinner several items will be raffled (**item donations to the raffle would be greatly appreciated**). Please contact Alberta Orcutt (508) 864 -3964 or Lori Stockhaus (508) 865-6439 if you plan to attend so we can get a head count.

If you aren't able to attend, but would still like to make a donation, please make checks payable to People to People and give to Lori or Alberta. Thanks in advance for your support.

From the Church Historians . . .

The following is an excerpt from a ledger that was stored in the Town Hall basement. It outlines step-by-step decisions made by our men in building our meetinghouse and forming our town.

George DuHamel & Paula Lubin
Church Historians

To Mr. Alexander Nichols, Constable of Ward

Greetings in the name of the Government and people of Massachusetts Bay you are hereby required forthwith to warn ye freeholders and other inhabitants of the Town of Ward qualified to vote in town affairs to meet at the public meeting house in said town on Monday the twentieth day of September next at one of the clock in the afternoon.

1. To choose a Moderator for Said meeting.
2. To raise money to support preaching.
3. To choose a Committee to divide the Town of Ward into proper squadrons for convenient schooling and to act on any thing relative to schooling that the Town may think proper.
4. To see whither the Town will adopt ye proceedings of the late Convention at Worcester respecting Commerce and to act anything relative thereto that they may be thought proper.
5. To see what measurers the Town will take respecting finishing the meeting house and act as may be thought necessary respecting said affair.

Hereof fail not but make due return of this warrant with your doings thereon unto some of us the subscribers on or before the time of s'd meeting.

Given under our hands & seal at Ward this third day of August A.D. 1779

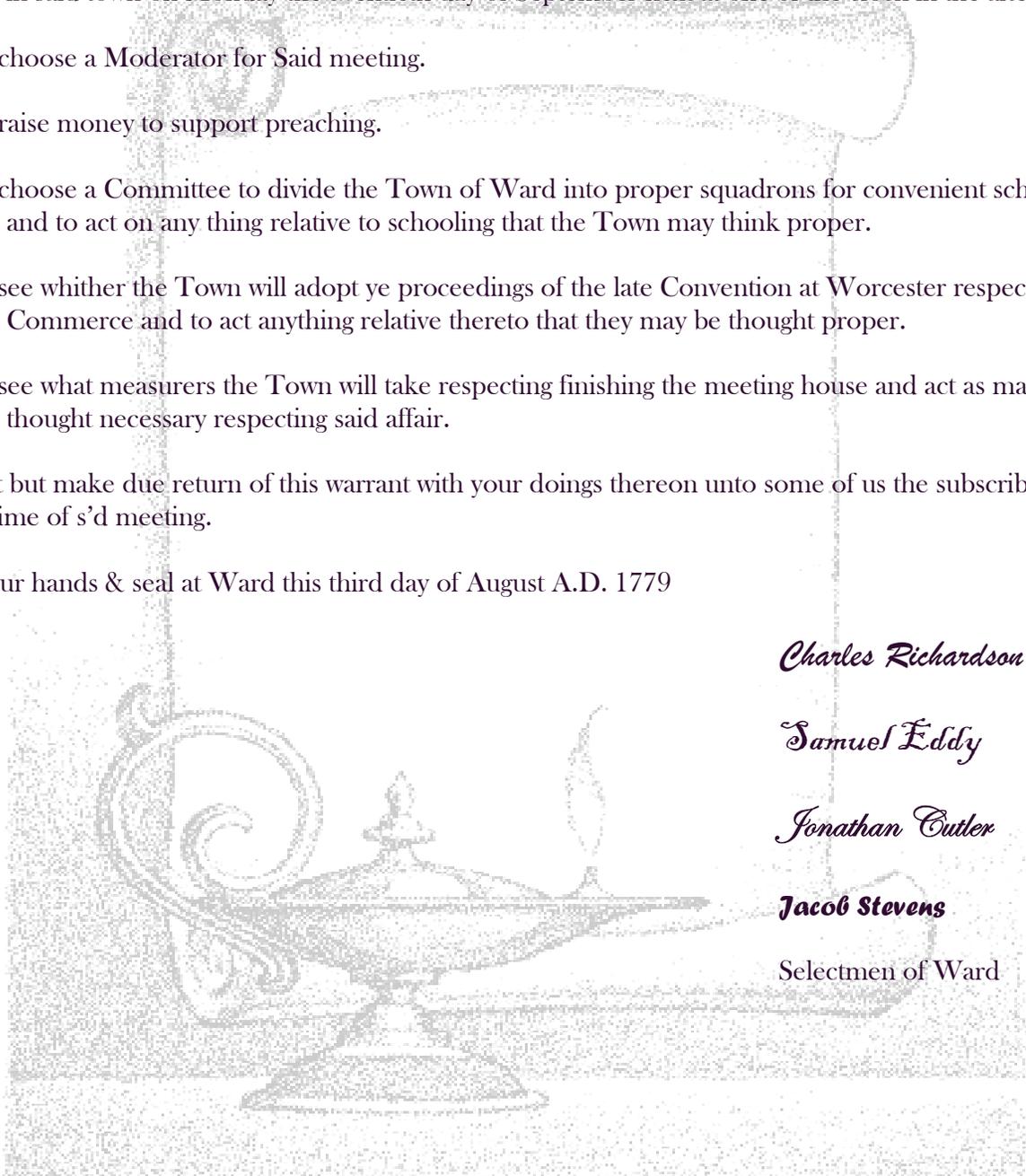
Charles Richardson

Samuel Eddy

Jonathan Butler

Jacob Stevens

Selectmen of Ward





May is Arthritis Awareness Month, Employee Health and Fitness Month, Better Hearing and Speech Month, Healthy Vision Month, Hepatitis Awareness Month and Lupus Awareness Month. It is also Melanoma/Skin Cancer Detection and Prevention Month, Mental Health Month, National Celiac Disease Awareness Month, and High Blood Pressure Education Month. National Osteoporosis Awareness and Prevention Month, National Physical Fitness and Sports Health Month, National Toxic Encephalopathy and Chemical Injury Awareness Month, Older Americans Month, and Ultraviolet Awareness Month are all in May.

May 1-7 is Children's Mental Health Awareness Week, and North American Occupational Safety and Health Week. May 2nd is Melanoma Monday. The 8 -14th is Food Allergy Awareness Week and National Women's Health Week. The 9-15th is National Stuttering Awareness Week. May 9th is National Women's Check-up Day. The 18th is HIV Vaccine Awareness Day. The 19th is National Asian and Pacific Islander HIV/AIDS Awareness Day and World Hepatitis Day. May 22-28 is National Hurricane Awareness Week. The 23-29th is Recreational Water Illness and Injury Prevention Week, May 25th is National Senior Health and Fitness Day. The 27th is Heat Safety Awareness Day and the 31st is World NO TOBACCO Day.

There are many things mentioned this month and I will have info on the table in Fellowship Hall. The sun is getting stronger and you need to be aware of it. Use sunscreen, sunglasses and/or wear a hat. Melanomas can be harmful. The ultraviolet rays can be harmful. I have info on the table.

God Bless!
Debbie Pranaitis,
Parish Nurse



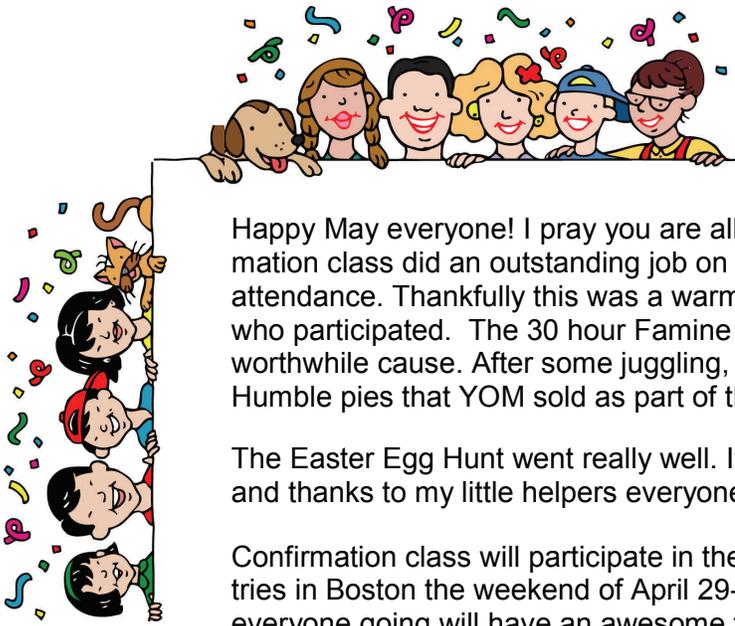
GENERAL SYNOD - 28

Tampa, Florida

July 1 - 5, 2011

Register online at ucc.org





FROM THE DIRECTOR OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Happy May everyone! I pray you are all enjoying the much anticipated Spring. The confirmation class did an outstanding job on the Sunrise Service. We had about 40 people in attendance. Thankfully this was a warm, although foggy, morning. Thanks again for all who participated. The 30 hour Famine went off well, and we thank all who donated to this worthwhile cause. After some juggling, everyone was able to enjoy the delicious Ever So Humble pies that YOM sold as part of their fundraiser.

The Easter Egg Hunt went really well. It was great to see so many children participating, and thanks to my little helpers everyone left "hoppy".

Confirmation class will participate in the CityReach program organized by Ecclesia Ministries in Boston the weekend of April 29-30. Thank you to all who contributed. I am sure everyone going will have an awesome time. I hear from past confirmands that this is the best program they do all year. Thank you to Cindy Cariglio and Shirley Hill for stepping up to help chaperone the trip.

On May 8th we will have a homemade candy sale so you can purchase something sweet for the woman (women) that make your life so sweet every day.

I hope everyone has a wonderful month and please stop down and visit the children and me any Sunday.

With His guidance we serve,
Jean McPherson
Director of Religious Education

Calling All Graduates . . . If you are aware of any students who will be graduating this spring please email Denise at secretary@auburnfirstucc.org or call the Church office (508) 832-2845. We would like to acknowledge our graduates in next month's *Tidings*.



On April 10th we celebrated the baptisms of Murphy William and Rylie Anne the 8 month old twins of Michael and Brie-Anne Dwyer. May the Lord bless and keep them.

Our next **Community Supper** is planned for
Saturday, May 21st at 5:00 p.m.

On the menu: **Spaghetti & Meatballs**

Adults \$10 Children \$5



First Congregational Church of Auburn
10th Annual Golf Tournament
Saturday August 6th, 2011
Pine Ridge Country Club in Oxford
12:30 p.m. Registration – 1:30 p.m. Tee-off

Event features:
Raffle - Longest Drive – Closest to the Pin Contest – Prizes to top 3 teams

\$95 per player – includes golf, cart and dinner!
Non-golfers welcome to join us for dinner - \$30.00 per person

-----detach here-----

Players:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

Sponsor a Hole - \$100.00

In Honor of: _____
 In memory of: _____
 or Business name: _____

Make checks payable to: First Congregational Church (write "GOLF" in memo)

Church World Service - Blankets+

Blankets+ (formerly called Tools & Blankets) is a special mission opportunity that can involve all ages. Some 8,000 congregations and groups across the United States hold CWS Blankets+ events, providing funds to help people in need around the world, including the U.S.

Your contributions provide the means to transform lives and communities when they are faced with an emergency or simply struggling to put food on the table. For over 60 years, Church World Service has worked in partnership with local communities to identify their needs and access the resources they need to build the foundation for a more viable future, including:

- Blankets, tents, food and other emergency supplies in the wake of a disaster
- Tools and seeds for refugees returning home to replant their fields
- Wells for families living in drought prone areas to provide clean, safe water to drink and to irrigate crops and gardens
- Literacy training and microcredit for women struggling to realize their potential.

Church World Service Blankets+ . . . It's about blankets and so much more!

You will find an offering envelope enclosed in this month's *Tidings*. Please make checks out to First Congregational Church and note "Blankets+" in the memo section. You can place the envelope in the offering plate on Sunday, or mail it to us at First Congregational Church, 128 Central St., Auburn. Also, if you would like to make a donation in honor of a loved one, CWS has provided us with special cards for this purpose. Look for a sample card on the table in Fellowship Hall. (There is no charge for the cards.)

For He delivers the needy when they call, the poor and those who have no helper. Psalm 72:12

COMMUNITY YARD SALE RETURNS - SPACES AVAILABLE



Spring cleaning? Do you have an accumulation of things that are just too good to throw away, but you no longer need? Don't throw that good "stuff" away. Recycle it by selling it to someone who needs it!

Don't have enough to hold your own yard sale? Join us on the church lawn **Saturday, June 18th** from 9 a.m. till 2 p.m. Space is available for a fee of \$15. (non church members \$20 fee) and tables may be rented for \$5. Let us do the advertising. We promise to post plenty of signs at key locations in town and will advertise in the local newspapers. As usual we will also have a plant sale, and strawberry shortcake booth. Lunch will be available also. As always we expect a large turnout of shoppers. Reserve your space today by calling Cindy Dube at 508-832-6646 or the church office at 508-832-2845.

PLANTS NEEDED - Soon we gardeners will be cleaning up our perennial beds. Please keep the church in mind and pot and label a few plants for our sale. If done early they will be well established in their pots in time for our **plant sale on June 18th**. Be creative! Look around your yard for something unusual to contribute - a potted lilac shoot, rhubarb, or something that is just not working for you. Thanks in advance for keeping this FUNdraiser going!



Plant Sale

TIDINGS is a monthly publication of

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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.

Pastor's Office Day: Thursday

*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

May 2011

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				

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED