



# 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

## A WORD FROM PASTOR BRIAN

### Bombing and Words

What I remember of 9/11/2001 was how beautiful a day it was — clear, blue sky; a nice, warm September day. It was a great day where I was, and blue, clear sky in New York and Washington. It seems too nice a day to be ruined by tragedy. Likewise, the marathon was on a sunny, warm April Day. The whole week was a nice week of April weather.

Immediately after the bombing The Westboro (so called) Baptist church (in my mind really a cult that survives by suing towns where they protest) said that the bombing was God’s retribution. A bunch of other people said likewise. I am having a hard time keeping my cool. God has a lot better tools at hand than small pressure cooker bombs. If God wanted to punish us, there are tornadoes and sinkholes, hurricanes and nor’easters. Why are crimes said to be the work of God, but seldom natural disasters? It used to be the other way around. The Israelites thought of the land and weather as a guide to their relationship with God. If they were beset by locusts, then God must be angry with them. If there was a drought, the Israelites must be ignoring their relationship with God.

The beautiful weather makes me think that God was not involved in the evil at the marathon or 9/11. God was surely involved in the people who ran to help. God was involved in the good weather that helped, rather than hindered, the search for the injured and the investigation of who did it.

When a tragedy strikes I think there is often too much talking. Too much talking on TV. Too much guessing out loud. Not enough waiting to know for sure. Not enough praying and listening. Some words are meant to hurt. Hurt us in mind and spirit. Be careful of words. People really want to talk for God. Too often they are really speaking for the devil. I leave you with the words of Psalm 64. The Psalmist knew the power of an evil tongue:

- 1 Hear me, my God, as I voice my complaint; protect my life from the threat of the enemy.
- 2 Hide me from the conspiracy of the wicked, from the plots of evildoers.
- 3 They sharpen their tongues like swords and aim cruel words like deadly arrows.
- 4 They shoot from ambush at the innocent; they shoot suddenly, without fear.
- 5 They encourage each other in evil plans, they talk about hiding their snares; they say, “Who will see it?”
- 6 They plot injustice and say, “We have devised a perfect plan!” Surely the human mind and heart are cunning.
- 7 But God will shoot them with His arrows; they will suddenly be struck down.
- 8 He will turn their own tongues against them and bring them to ruin; all who see them will shake their heads in scorn.
- 9 All people will fear; they will proclaim the works of God and ponder what He has done.
- 10 The righteous will rejoice in the Lord and take refuge in Him; all the upright in heart will glory in Him!

*(May sermon titles may be found on pg. 6)*

**Coffee Hour Hosts**

- 5/5 Historian, Memorial, Scholarship & Nominating Committees
- 5/12 Music Committee
- 5/19, 5/26 Board of Christian Education

Please mark your calendars for **Sunday, June 2nd**, and plan to join us as we celebrate our children on **Children’s Sunday.**

Following our service that day we will be having our annual picnic which will include hamburgers and hot dogs provided by the Board of Christian Education.

We will be looking for donations of desserts and salads, so please look for a sign-up sheet in Fellowship Hall as the date approaches.



Carole & Bob Murray will be celebrating their special day on May 4<sup>th</sup>.

**CRADLE ROLL**

- |                   |                   |
|-------------------|-------------------|
| 5/5 Bessie Morgan | 5/12 Jen Bohn     |
| 5/19 Linda Hardy  | 5/26 Shirley Hill |
| 6/2 Judy Murphy   | 6/9 Cindy Dube    |

**SUNDAY SCHOOL** 5/5-5/26 Friendship Unit

- |                      |                          |
|----------------------|--------------------------|
| Science: Nan Johnson | Cooking: Lilly McPherson |
| Games: Beth Szydlik  | Video: Melynn Guilford   |

We are looking for volunteers for the Fall. Remember, this is only a 3 week commitment. Please see Jean McPherson if you’re able to lend a hand. **Thank you!**

We continue to hold scheduled potluck suppers (a combination of the “Spirit Suppers” and a book/movie club - “Dinner and Discussion”) in the vestry. The next get together will be on **Tuesday, May 21st at 6:00 p.m.** We will be discussing the book, *The Third Jesus* by Deepak Chopra.

EVERYONE is invited to join us for any or all parts of the evening.

Looking ahead to our June 25th potluck supper, plan to join us at 5:30 p.m. as we view and discuss the movie, *To Save a Life*, a movie about teens, their problems and reactions.

**HEAR YE ! HEAR YE !**

A reminder to those of us who have a hearing loss — A new hearing aid system has been installed in the sanctuary of our church. The new system is compact, comfortable, portable and easy to use. The deacons are able to instruct you in its use just minutes before a service. The quality of the sound is remarkable. No more straining to hear and understand what is being spoken at Sunday service.

A well deserved "thank you" to Stu Campbell for his tireless efforts in bringing this project to a successful completion. Stu spent many hours researching and screening the many hearing systems that were available. Those of us who suffer a hearing loss are the beneficiaries of Stu's efforts.

As a user, I can attest to the outstanding results of this "hearing helper."

Yours Respectfully,  
Mike Dube

**Church World Service - Blankets+**

Blankets+ (formerly called Tools & Blankets) provides funds to help people in need around the world, including the U.S. Donations 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 providing 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; and 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 the church noting “Blankets+” in the memo section and place in the offering plate on Sunday, or mail to the church: 128 Central Street, Auburn, MA 01501.



May is Arthritis Awareness Month, Better Hearing and Speech Month, as well as Healthy Vision Month. It is also Melanoma/Skin Cancer Detection and Prevention Month, Mental Health Month, National Asthma and Allergy Awareness Month, National High Blood Pressure Education Month, National Physical Fitness and Sports Month, and Ultraviolet Awareness Month.

5-11	Children's Mental Health Awareness Week
5	Hand Hygiene Day
13-19	National Alcohol and Other Drug Related Birth Defects Awareness Week
24	Heat Safety Awareness Day
26-June 1	National Hurricane Preparedness Week
31	World No Tobacco Day

I hope some of these observances help to remind you to make appointments, if you need them. Also, there is information on the table in Fellowship Hall.

Don't forget to check the closet inside the entrance to the educational wing, if you need medical equipment. Please be careful when you go out in the sun.

**\*\*\* Use sunscreen and wear sunglasses. Be safe!**

God Bless!

Debbie Pranaitis, Parish Nurse

### FROM THE DIRECTOR OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Well, the May flowers are blooming and we survived another winter — Praise God!

The confirmands had a powerful experience at CityReach in Boston last month. I truly believe that CityReach is a program that is important for all to attend and experience.

May 12th is Mother's Day. Happy Mother's Day to all the Moms.

On May 19th we will be celebrating Confirmation Sunday. This is a day when we should rejoice with these 7 young adults who have, for the past 9 months, been learning all about God's teachings, what it means to be a Christian and a member of First Congregational Church of Auburn. Personally, they were invaluable to us down in Sunday school as our "extra" hands or the "cool" older kid who would hang out with us during class. Please join me after service on the 19th to congratulate and welcome our newest members.



Sunday School will end on Children's Sunday which is June 2nd. We will celebrate another successful year with an old fashioned picnic on the lawn (weather permitting). Hamburgers, hot dogs, as well as drinks, will be provided by the Board of Christian Ed. We ask those of you who will be joining us, which we pray will be all, to bring a salad or dessert to share with the group. PLEASE sign-up so we can plan for food. There will be a sign up sheet in fellowship hall. After eating, we will have time for old fashioned games on the lawn for all to participate in. Three legged races and tug-of war are on our list, so start practicing. Mark your calendars and join us in celebrating OUR children.

**Save the date:** we are planning VBS - Vacation Bible School, for the week of July 15-19 from 5 to 7 p.m. Look for more details to come!

With His guidance we serve,

Jean McPherson, Director of Religious Education

### DRIVE FOR A DRIVEWAY

Due to its deteriorated and unsafe condition, it has been voted by the church to replace the driveway and parking lot. This is a project that is long overdue. It was voted by the congregation to use invested funds to get this project underway, but the reality of the situation is, it is never good to permanently use these funds. Invested funds are used to generate income for the church on a yearly basis, and to use the principal portion of these funds for capital expenditures is not in the best interest of the church's future.

So, we have decided to initiate a campaign to replace those funds. The goal is \$35,000. We are looking for long term as well as individual commitments to reach our goal.

Thank you in advance for your generosity.

Your Board of Trustees

### HAITI BOUND

Randy and I will return to Haiti as part of another medical mission team this fall (9/30 to 10/9). We will be venturing out of Port-Au-Prince to some more remote areas for the clinics. This year's trip is \$1,700 per person. The funds include food, travel, lodging as well as some of the medical supplies we will be taking with us and purchasing in Haiti. The Outreach Committee has generously supported us by paying our \$500 deposit, but we still need your help. If you would like to help, please speak to Randy or me, or you can give your donations directly to Lori Stockhaus.

As we get closer to departure, look for info on a list of over-the-counter medicines we'll be collecting for the trip.

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

In His Service,

Jennifer & Randy Bohn

### D.U.C.K.S. NEWS (RELAY FOR LIFE TEAM)

Thank you to everyone who helped with our first fundraiser. As of April 14th our fundraising efforts have resulted in \$565 raised for cancer research! We will be having another fundraiser on May 12th, Mother's Day. Available for purchase will be homemade cakes and cupcakes. Surprise that special someone with homemade treats while helping out a worthwhile cause. We are also starting our dime bottle drive. On Sundays we will have our "duck" bottles on tables in fellowship hall and challenge you to be the first table to fill your duck. We will also have bottles available for you to take for home or your office to fill and return. We thank all of you for participating in making the 10th anniversary of the Relay the best one yet!

We are always looking for others to join our team in any capacity you are able. Please talk to me or Shirley Hill for more information. Together we can help "Quack Out Cancer."

Jean McPherson



### Calling All Graduates . . .

If you are aware of any students who will be graduating this spring, please email Denise at: [secretary@auburnfirstucc.org](mailto:secretary@auburnfirstucc.org) or call the Church office, (508) 832-2845.

We would like to acknowledge our graduates in next month's *Tidings* and future bulletins.



### From **Here We Grow** Preschool

I can't believe we are already in the month of May. With that being said, we are now beginning to prepare for the end of another school year. The 4-year-old classes will be visiting Mary D. Stone School on May 29<sup>th</sup> 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 here in March fingerprinting all our 4-year-olds. All information was stored on a thumb drive donated by Mike Lavallee. Other visitors this year were the Auburn Fire Department, the Tooth Fairy, a veterinarian and the Auburn Children's Librarian. Thank you to all community groups for their continued support.

With the nice weather upon us, we have been able to spend more time at the outdoor playground. This year the 2-day classes will be visiting Stowe Farm in Millbury for their end-of-year field trip. The 3-day and 5-day classes will be visiting PlayTown Express in Southborough and will be traveling by bus provided by AA Transportation.

Closing out the school year will be the 3-year-olds' program, 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. 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 back. Yes, I have already started a wait list for the school year '15/'16. Whatever each family is doing, it is a time for goodbyes. We will miss each 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: Medieval Adventures and Diggin' the Dino's. If you know of anyone looking for a summer program, please send them our way. HWG will close on June 28th for the summer and will return in late August.

At this time, most of the present staff will be returning next year except Mrs. Lempicki; who will be taking care of her new baby niece. The entire staff wishes her well and are a little jealous that she gets to hold a new baby. As far as the rest of the staff, we all will be returning, IF ALL GOES WELL!!! I'll keep you informed if anything changes.

Until next month, enjoy the weather and the beauty that comes along with Spring.

Dawn Murphy  
Director  
**Here We Grow** Preschool

**Dorothy Heath**, a long-time member of our church, passed away on Sunday, April 21, 2013. She leaves her son, Gregory Heath, and his wife, Judith. Dorothy also leaves her 4 grandchildren, and her sister, Joan Battye, and brother, S. William Larson. Dorothy's husband, Frank R. Heath, predeceased her. Burial will be held privately. Please keep Dorothy's family and loved ones in your thoughts and prayers.



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



*Library Tidings* by Gloria Whitehead

This is the first of two subjects in this month's *Library Tidings*. May the #1 issue be easily solved. The libraries, adult and children's, are missing books. They've "not come home" for several years in too many cases, and the library "Truant Officers" are asking for your "concentrated" help. Just in case you're new and/or unfamiliar, the Adult Library at the rear of the Sanctuary is open almost as often as the church is open. The Children's Library is on the lower level. It's marked as such on its door which is at the end of the long hall that starts at the entrance from the parking lot. It is open on Sundays, on scheduled weekdays for *Here We Grow* preschool, and at various arranged requests. Easy borrowing and return instructions are in both locations, but never hesitate to ask questions. Will you please see if you can find ANY church library books (marked as such inside the cover leaf of the book) at home or anywhere you may have left one? If, by chance, it may be damaged, please return it anyway. Explanations are appreciated. Too many of our "hard covered children" are missing from their shelves and we're hoping and concerned that they come home.

And now, #2 on the list . . .

*I Love Spring* - doesn't that sound welcome? Clara Juh Lewis continues on in her book for early readers.

"It's a tree in bud and puddles of mud. It's days getting long.  
It's kites in the sky. It's spring. That's why . . . I love spring."

And then with a rhythm she contrasts it to other seasons. It's best when read aloud.

Next, *And Then It's Spring* - with tricky and humorous illustrations by Erin Stead, you'll be won over to Julie Fogliano's pleasing explanation of how it gets here.

In a thin, small paperback there's a book containing two stories, *The Pearl* and *The Red Pony*. They were written and published by John Steinbeck in 1947 and 1933 respectively. Eighty years ago? The wording and descriptions are awesome throughout both and, but for fixed facts of the period, the two stories could slip into 2013. *The Pearl* is exceptionally large and becomes a source of symbolic dreams until it disappears. It's all taken from a Mexican folktale.

Regarding *The Red Pony*, the strength of the grandfather's personality prevails as his impatient son, his grandson, Jody, and Billy Buck, a hired hand, all fit into a descriptive blend in the California ranch mountain scene. Nature's wonders and creatures of the woodland are a perfect backdrop for a great message.

It's a perfect time to thank Vi Hanks for her gift of *Quiet Times for Mothers* by Julie Graham. This little paperback, filled with daily readings, provides a chance to turn a day around by spending several minutes with our divine Shepherd.

**SERMON TITLES FOR MAY**

5/5 "Luke and 'We'"

5/12 "Caring for In-laws"

5/19 Confirmation & Communion Sunday

5/26 Pastor Brian will be on vacation; Cliff P. will share

**Children's Time:**

5/5 "What Does Heaven Look Like?"

5/12 "What Do Moms Do?"

5/19 Confirmation & Communion Sunday

5/26 Memorial Weekend - Pastor Brian will be on vacation  
Jean McPherson will share

Pastor Brian will be on vacation  
May 22nd through May 29th.



## From the Stewardship Committee

We are happy (in fact, delighted) to share with you this year's Stewardship theme:

### DELIGHT IN GIVING

To us, this says it all.

"It is our conviction that we are created in the image of our giving God... we invite you to take notice of moments of delight in your life, give thanks for gifts received, and anticipate the delight you will experience in making your pledge of support for the ministry of our church." [from the UCC website]

There are so many things to delight us in life, which become even sweeter when shared.

What are the moments of delight in your life?

How can we experience a feeling of delight in sharing our love for God and our support for First Congregational and each other?

We will explore these questions as the year unfolds. Stay tuned!

In His love,

Your Stewardship Committee

Ellie Lowell, Rufus Guilford, Sue Klaucke, Rich McPherson, Cliff Peterson, Bev Scobie

*Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver. 2 Corinthians 9:7*

### SPAGHETTI SUPPER FUNDRAISER

As many of you already know, Cassie Stockhaus has been selected, interviewed and accepted to participate in the People to People Student Ambassador program and will be traveling to France, England, Wales and Ireland 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 \$7,500 which includes all transportation, accommodations, meals, educational activities and insurance. **To help offset the cost, we are having a spaghetti supper fundraiser on May 11th here at the First Congregational Church in Auburn starting at 5:00 p.m.** The tickets are \$10 for adults and \$5 for kids 12 and under.

Following the dinner several items will be raffled (item donations to the raffle would be greatly appreciated).

Please contact Lori Stockhaus at (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. Thanks in advance for your support.

### **BOOK YOUR PORTRAIT SITTING TODAY!**

Portrait sittings for our new Church photo directory are filling up! The Lifetouch photographer will be here at First Congregational Church between 2 and 9 p.m. on May 3rd, 14th, and 15th, and between 10 a.m. and 5 p.m. on Saturday, May 4th. **Our directory won't be complete without YOU — the members and friends of First Congregational Church! It's not too late to book your sitting, but don't delay - schedule your appointment today!** It's easy. You may arrange for your sitting through a link on our church website: [auburnfirstucc.org](http://auburnfirstucc.org), by calling the church office at 508-832-2845, or during designated coffee hours.

If for some reason you don't wish to have your picture included in our new photo directory, but would like to include your contact information (name, address, phone number and email), please contact the church office (as soon as possible) at 508-832-2845 or email: [secretary@auburnfirstucc.org](mailto:secretary@auburnfirstucc.org). Thank you.

# First Congregational Church of Auburn 12th Annual Golf Tournament

Saturday August 3rd, 2013

Pine Ridge Country Club in Oxford, MA

12:30 p.m. Registration - 1:30 p.m. Tee-off

\$100 per player - includes golf, cart and dinner!

Non-golfers welcome to join us for dinner - \$30 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)

TIDINGS is a monthly publication of

**First Congregational Church,  
United Church of Christ  
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*God's church in Auburn Center  
doing Christ's work in the world.*

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## May 2013

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OR CURRENT RESIDENT