



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

Are We Educated or Are We Set in Our Opinions?

The most annoying thing this election has done is mess up my Facebook feed. I am getting a lot of political postings from friends in my feed. Worse are the snide responses that sometimes erupt into flame wars. Each side of an issue posts “facts” that support their side. The ones I see that I do not agree with I research on Snopes.com, a website on urban legends, hoaxes, and other internet “information.” Of course, if the post matches my worldview I take it as confirmation that I am right and truly one of the smartest, wisest, and overall best humans that ever lived. If I see Snopes does not agree with my very well thought out and perfectly correct ideas (really poorly thought out prejudices if I am being honest; who can be knowledgeable on all subjects? only God) then I discount their research.

I also look at Snopes when I get an appeal to send likes to a little kid, or other feel good stories, to see if that appeal is now decades old and the little kid is now 30 years old.

The internet is a great unifier and great at strengthening separation. No matter what you do or think, no matter how strange and unpopular it is, there is a website and community dedicated to it. We can cocoon ourselves around people that believe the same things we do. That destroys the marketplace of ideas required in a democratic republic. We do not get the friction of two different ideas rubbing against each other and making new, better ideas. Instead we get a monopoly of ideas.

There are few places in America where Democrats are likely to defeat Republican incumbents or vice versa. Most political districts have been gerrymandered to the point that they are “safe” for the politician holding the seat. These monopolies, like all monopolies, are bad for competition and bad for most people. Can you remember how bad life was under Ma Bell? As bad as telephone companies are now, imagine how bad they were when the only choice was one company. I fear this is the way the country is going; you have to be all conservative or all liberal. There is no room to be a little bit country or a little bit rock and roll like Donny and Marie Osmond.

Now with all this we should remember that this is nothing new. The news likes superlatives, “This is the worst (best, longest) thing ever.” When, in fact, things have been much worse and even better than they are now. I saw a clip showing people calling every presidential election of the last 30 years the most important election of our lifetime. Well, they can’t all be the most important and, in fact, most were of no importance at all in the grand scheme of things.

The most important thing we will do is make our ordinary decisions. Decide who to love. Where to live. What to do. These decisions will have a great impact on the world and our place in it. Are we doing anything to help us? To help the world? And are they mutually exclusive?

Our role is to win people for Christ. I do not think shouting matches and screaming is the way to do that. Talking, sharing, trying to understand why people think and feel the way they do is the place to start. Then, if they do not agree with you, you will know how they went wrong (kidding).

Pastor Brian

SERMON TITLES FOR MAY

5/1 “Lydia, the Seller of Mercedes”

5/8 “You Will Receive a 100 Mothers”

5/15 “The Spirit, the Advocate”

5/22 “A Centurion Who Knew”

5/29 “The Hymn of Wisdom”



Carole & Bob Murray will be celebrating their special day on May 4th. Happy Anniversary, Bob & Carole!

Coffee Hour Hosts

5/1	Board of Trustees
5/8	Board of Ed (BOCE)
5/15	Financial Secretaries/Treasurers
5/22	Stewardship Committee
5/29	Board of Deacons
6/5	Board of Ed (BOCE)

Church World Service

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 . . . It's about blankets and so much more!

An offering envelope is 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 a check directly to the church: 128 Central St., Auburn, MA 01501. Thank you!

Are you interested in playing handbells? Finding out what handbells are? Seeing one up close?

About a half dozen folks have indicated an interest in playing handbells. We will have a short get-together during the coffee hour on May 15th to see where we go from here. Anyone, middle school age or older, is welcome to check out this opportunity (no upper age limit).

No previous handbell experience required. Cannot read music? We have an easy solution for this.

Looking forward to seeing you on May 15th.

If you cannot make this get-together but are interested, contact either the Church Office [508-832-2845] or Herb Mower [508-434-2864 or mower@alum.mit.edu].

OLDER ADULT JOB FAIR

If you're 50+ and looking for work, please join us on

Friday, May 20th from 1:30 to 4 p.m.

Auburn Senior Center, 4 Goddard Drive

***** Registration is required *****

Call Workforce Central Career Center at 508-799-1600 ext. 601 to reserve your seat!

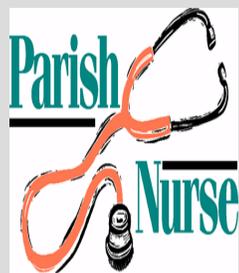
ATTENTION CHURCH MEMBERS:

You may help yourself to the large, heavy, wooden tables under the stage if you would like them.

Join us at our monthly potluck suppers and book/movie club - "Dinner and Discussion."

The next get together will be on **Tuesday, May 17th, beginning at 6 p.m.** when we will discuss, Philemon, the New Testament book of the Bible. All are welcome!





May is Asthma and Allergy Awareness Month, National Physical Fitness and Sports Month, National High Blood Pressure Education Month, National Melanoma/Skin Cancer Awareness Month, National Mental Health Month, Healthy Vision Month/UV Safety, National Arthritis Month, National Osteoporosis Month, and National Stroke Awareness Month. Signs of a stroke are easy to remember with the letters F-A-S-T. F- facial drooping, A-arms weak, S-speech difficulty and T-time to call 9-1-1.

It is time to purchase new sunscreen. You can't depend on last year's purchases to have the same strength as the year before. Also, wear sunglasses to prevent UV damage to your eyes. Please remember to protect the children as well.

Please remember to check the closet, before you purchase medical equipment, like walkers, wheelchairs, commodes, etc. I may know of equipment that is elsewhere; so feel free to ask. The closet will be cleaned at the end of April, but the contents change frequently, so I don't always know what is there.

The widows/widowers' meeting will be on Friday, May 6th at 9:30. We meet in the conference room and anyone is welcome. It is an informal get-together to share experiences and support others in the same role (everyone's situation is different!).

Have a safe and healthy month.

God Bless!

Debbie Pranaitis

Parish Nurse

Cell: 508-612-4521



BAKE SALE

MOTHER'S DAY BAKE SALE

The Choir and Music Committee are joining efforts by

holding a bake sale fundraiser during coffee hour on Mother's Day. So look no further when in need of something delicious for Mother's Day on Sunday, May 8th!

SPECIAL MAY COMMUNITY SUPPER

Our next Community Supper will be held on Saturday, May 21st, at 5 p.m. It will be a special outreach supper (not a fundraiser) and many church volunteers will be needed to ensure its success. So, please mark your calendars and look for more info to come in future bulletins or call the church office. Thank you!

FROM THE DIRECTOR OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Well, I believe the snow is finally over! We are all looking forward to nice weather and enjoying time outside. Why not ask a neighbor you haven't seen for a while for a quick walk or stop in for a cup of tea? We need to realize that our time on this earth is a gift and we never know when we will be called home to our heavenly Father.

YOM had a sleepover during April vacation. I want to thank Pastor Brian and Lori Stockhaus for covering for me.

Calling all teens grade 8 and up who are interested in joining the confirmation class this fall. Please see Pastor Brian or me so we can get an idea of how many are interested. We usually meet directly after church on Sundays and a few other dates throughout the year. **There will be an informational meeting for both parents and teens on June 12th following the service. Confirmation classes will begin September 11th.**

Please note that we now have a middle school Sunday school class meeting weekly in the "green room" (located across from the restrooms in the office wing).

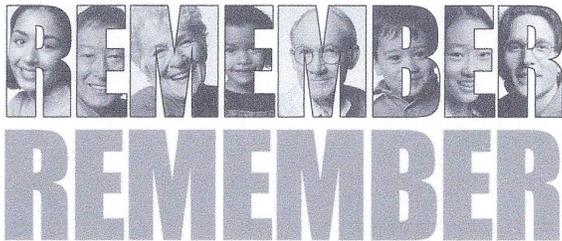
We are gearing up for Children's Sunday which is June 5th. Once again we will have our annual picnic on the lawn. Please mark your calendars for what always turns into a fun afternoon. The classes are growing and we are always looking for new faces to help out.

Thank you to all of you who help out each week and those of you who pop in when needed. Have a wonderful month and see you at the picnic.



With His guidance we serve,

Jean McPherson
Director of Religious Education



Remembering the words the Lord Jesus Himself said:
"It is more blessed to give than to receive."
Acts 20:35

In keeping with last month's thoughts, that Stewardship is a year-long commitment, that giving to, and doing for, our church is an ongoing experience, we have chosen the word REMEMBER as our theme for this year.

As a committee we look forward to working with this idea and hope you will find it meaningful.

Your Stewardship Committee —
Cindy Dube, Linda Hardy, Marilyn Kulesa, Sheila Skog
and Jacob and Lauren Webb

Dear Friends,

I want to thank you for the love and encouragement you have given to my family and me over the past few weeks. Your cards, phone calls, donations, and especially your prayers have meant so much to us. The church helped my mom during difficult times in her life, and now your support is helping her family. I am so blessed to have a wonderful church family.

*In Christian Love,
Barbara Allaire*

From **Here We Grow** Preschool

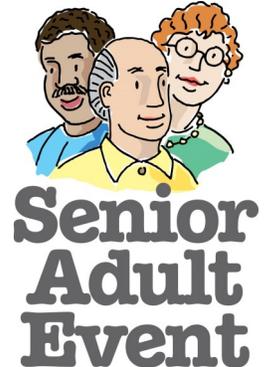


With the month of May here, we are preparing for the end of our school year. And, we are very busy getting ready for field trips, spree day and graduation.

Thank you to all who participated in our Papa Gino's fundraiser.

We were fortunate to have had the Worcester Police, Massachusetts State Police, Members of the Amber Alert Team and Maggie Bish visit us on April 13th to do fingerprinting of all graduating four-year-olds. Thank you to all community groups for their continued support.

On May 2 from 9:30 - 11:30 a.m. we invite "seniors" from First Congregational Church to visit Here We Grow and spend time in the classrooms with our four-year-olds. We are so excited about this. Last year was wonderful and we hope many will join us this year for our **Intergenerational Day**. Sign-up in Fellowship Hall or you can contact the school directly at 508-832-8184.



We will be having our end of year field trips in May. The three-year-olds are going to Stowe's Farm and the 4-year-olds are going to The Boroughs YMCA.

We still have openings for 3 and 4-year-olds — spread the word.

Graduations will be done during the day, the first full week of June.

Until next month, enjoy spring —

Gina Basili
Director, **Here We Grow** Preschool

Worcester Fellowship Outing May 1 at 12:30 P.M.

On Sunday, May 1, members of the Outreach Committee and the Youth Group will be joining the Worcester Fellowship (a church among men and women without homes) for worship on the Worcester Common. We'll be leaving after church. All are welcome to join us! Just let an Outreach Committee member or Pastor Brian know if you're interested.

Outreach members include: Deb Pranaitis, Shirley Hill, Pat Bukoski, Marion Woodcock, Laurie Babcock, and Ellie Lowell.

Confirmation Class

We are looking to hold an informational meeting after worship on June 12th for teens (and their parents) who are interested in attending our next Confirmation Class series which will begin in September (9/11/16).

These classes are for 8th and 9th grade students and are designed to prepare our youth for their confirmation in 2017. So, discuss the classes with your teen and join us after worship on June 12th.



We celebrated the baptism of Kennady Elizabeth O'Neill on Sunday, April 24th. Kennady is the 5 ½ month old daughter of James and Kyla O'Neill.

Proud family members include grandparents Jennifer and Randy Bohn, and great-grandparents Judy Murphy and Mike and Cindy Dube. We pray God's continued blessing upon Kennady and her family.

A Celebration of Abby Kelley Foster's Legacy and 40 Years of Abby's House at LIBERTY FARM

116 Mower Street, Worcester

Saturday, May 21, between 2:00 and 5:00 p.m.

- MEET the "Foster Family"
- TOUR Liberty Farm
- LEARN about the Underground Railroad
- PLAY with 19th Century Toys
- TRY quilting, quilling and writing with a quill pen

Please let an Outreach member (Deb Pranaitis, Shirley Hill, Pat Bukoski, Marion Woodcock, Laurie Babcock, Ellie Lowell) or Pastor Brian know if you're interested in going as a group.

Abby's House, a place providing safety and shelter for women of all views and backgrounds, is named in honor of Abby Kelley Foster, abolitionist and advocate for women's rights.

The Auburn Cultural Council presents its Spring Art Show —

"Art for the Arts" Show and Sale

Saturday, May 7th, from 10-3 at Pakachoag Church

The show is free and open to the public and will feature original framed works in these categories: oil/acrylic paintings, water-colors, photographs, graphic art (pen and ink, graphite, colored pencils, pastels, charcoal), mixed media, and sculpture.



Please be in prayer for the Shoblom/Sanborn Family due to the recent passing of Donald R. Shoblom III.

Donald Robert Shoblom III, 30, died unexpectedly at home on March 26, 2016. He leaves behind his legacy in his daughters, Grace Autumn and Harper Rose Shoblom; his fiancé, Stephanie Sanborn; his parents, Donald Jr. and Chong Sim Shoblom; and his brother, David Shoblom; all of Oxford; his grandparents, Donald and Earleen Shoblom of Auburn; his aunt and uncle, Vicki and Keith Lacrosse, and his cousin, Erika Lacrosse, all of Millbury; and his grandmother, aunts, uncles, and cousins in South Korea.

Don enjoyed spending time with his family, drawing, and Frisbee golfing. He was currently pursuing a Computer Science Degree at Quinsigamond Community College. He will be truly missed by those who loved him. A memorial service was held in the Rural Cemetery Chapel in Worcester on Friday, April 1.

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

John 11:25

Those
Graduating
In Our
Church



Calling All Graduates . . .

If you are aware of any students with ties to First Congregational who will be graduating this spring, please email Denise at: secretary@auburnfirstucc.org or call the Church office, (508) 832-2845. Please include where they're graduating from and when, details of their future plans, and list family members (parents/grandparents) who are known within the church.

We would like to acknowledge our graduates in the June *Tidings* and a future bulletin.

REMINDER:

Due to its tendency to attract ants, we have decided to suspend our bottle/can drive.

Thank you to all who helped with this youth fundraiser.

Mark your calendars for:

THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE CENTRAL ASSOCIATION

Sunday, May 1ST at 3:30 p.m.

First Parish of Bolton, 673 Main St., Bolton, MA

Register at:

macucc.org/eventdetail/central-association

Massachusetts Conference, United Church of Christ 217th ANNUAL MEETING ~ June 17 & 18, 2016

University of Massachusetts (Hotel UMass), 1 Campus Center Way, Amherst, MA

“Boldness” to Characterize the 217th Annual Meeting! “...proclaiming the kingdom of God and teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness and without hindrance.” - Acts 28:31
Says one children’s song: “Be Bold, Be Brave, for the Lord our God is with us!”

The Annual Meeting is an opportunity to gather around God’s immense table of grace, to spend some time in a season of discernment concerning our future. It is a time when bold new initiatives are presented, worship is creative and uplifting, networking is possible at every turn, new ideas are introduced, and the people and ministries of the Massachusetts Conference of the UCC shine with the good news of Jesus the Christ.
Come celebrate, worship, and be joyful together as the Body of Christ!

“[Paul] proclaimed the kingdom of God and taught about Jesus Christ—with all boldness and without hindrance!” [Acts 28:31]. Our Annual Meeting will be an opportunity to focus on our “boldness” in sharing the good news of God’s love and grace as exemplified and made visible through the gathered individuals and in our work together as the Body of Christ. The **Keynote Speaker** is The Rev. Otis Moss III who serves as senior pastor of Trinity United Church of Christ in Chicago, IL. He is an ordained minister in the Progressive National Baptist Convention and the UCC, carrying dual standing in both denominations. The Rev. Dr. Moss received his Bachelor of Arts in Religion and Philosophy from Morehouse College and a Master of Divinity from Yale University.

The **Fall Fair Extravaganza** is planned for **Oct. 15th & 16th**. We are excited and anticipate another successful fair! Once again we’re reaching out to the congregation for your ideas! As you may recall, last year we had various themes or themed tables such as crafts, jellies/jams (food items), Christmas/Halloween sections, etc.

To ensure its success, the planning must begin NOW! **Join us on May 1st after worship** as we gather to exchange ideas for this year’s fair.

This is a great opportunity to get to know the rest of your church family!
Please contact Cindy Ryan at 508-832-3416 with any questions.



COMMUNITY YARD SALE---PLANT SALE---COOKOUT

SATURDAY, JUNE 18th, 8 a.m. to 2 p.m.



Spring cleaning? Don't throw that good "stuff" away. Recycle it by selling it to someone who needs it! Do you have an accumulation of things that are just too good to throw away, but you no longer need? Don't have enough to hold your own yard sale? Join us on the church lawn for our

COMMUNITY YARD SALE!

Spaces are \$15 for church members, \$20 for non-members. Use of a table is \$5 per table. Please contact Cindy Dube at 508-832-6646 or Denise in the church office at 508-832-2845 to secure your spot.

We need your help to make this event a success. You can carry out tables and chairs, help serve and clean refreshment tables, help clean-up and return tables inside at the end of the day, make a monetary donation to help defray costs, **SHOW YOUR SUPPORT** by donating perennials, renting a yard sale space, shopping at the yard sale, and joining us for a cookout and strawberry shortcake. Remember to invite lots of friends and family to join you!



TIDINGS is a monthly publication of

**First Congregational Church,
United Church of Christ
128 Central St., Auburn MA 01501**

Phone: (508) 832-2845

Office Hours: Mon.-Fri. 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

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or PastorBrian@auburnfirstucc.org

*God's church in Auburn Center
doing Christ's work in the world.*

Web: auburnfirstucc.org



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OR CURRENT RESIDENT