
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

FROM THE PASTOR

“May I? May I go out to play?” Unless there was a thunderstorm my mom always said yes to my request. I went outside in blizzards and rainy days as well as sunny, warm days.

Most summer days I saw Mom at breakfast, supper, and bedtime and that was it. Kids were expected to be outside and away from home. I rode my bike up and down the roads of Errol to my friends’ houses. Being in the country, my friends were often a mile or more away from my house.

We caught frogs and crayfish in the creeks. At night we went horn-pouting. We built forts in the woods. I was 14 before I played a game with an adult coach or referee. Most of our games were refereed by yelling and occasionally wrestling. Playing baseball only with other kids taught me to negotiate. Was this call worth ending the game over? Or would a do over be ok? Or rock, paper, scissors? Figuring things out for ourselves was what childhood was all about.

All adults had the right and responsibility to look out for all kids. My mom heard what I was doing from other moms and even complete strangers. In South Dakota I had to drive slow because kids were in the yards playing and on the streets biking. Residential streets in the summer were a kid-filled zone.

My childhood was not that different from that of Tom Sawyer or the *Little Rascals*. I also had a clubhouse we built ourselves. Today, childhood is very different. I do not see kids out on their bikes. I seldom see kids out in their yards. It seems childhood is no longer an outside experience. It even hit South Dakota near the end of my time there, and South Dakota in many ways was like living in *Leave it to Beaver* times.

Kids need to be inside now. Kids need to be under an adult’s eyes at all times. There are stories of nosy neighbors calling the police over kids playing in their yard while their mom is in the kitchen. Could my mom have imagined such a thing? Would the cops bother to investigate such a common thing back in the 70’s?

How did this happen? It can’t be the crime rate. There was more crime in the 70’s and 80’s than there is now. But somehow we fear more for our children, now that crime is rare. Crime is rare, but we fear more and we fear for our children. The world is a scary place. Kids need to be protected.

But listening to our fears is a dangerous thing. Fear can be healthy. But fear can often lead to overreaction and big trouble. The world can be a dangerous place, but kids have to live in the world. They will one day be adults. I like the saying, “We are not raising children. We are raising adults.” How will children be adults if they are never given room and time to be on their own as we hope adults will be.

When I got on my mom’s nerves, I was sent outside to run and play all the energy out. What do moms do now to get a break from all that childish energy?

If I said I was bored? “Go outside and amuse yourself,” was the response. Or I was given a chore to do, so I was at least bored while being useful.

As a kid, most people were thought to be good people. Now we have stranger danger. Kids once needed independence. Now they need protection. Kids used to walk or bike most places. Now they need a car to get where they are going.

We can’t even blame parents. If the cops and social services investigate kids playing unsupervised, that is a society wide problem.

For some reason we changed the rules of childhood and parenting without any discussion. We added a lot of fear and stress to parenting. We took childhood away from children. Is this a better way? I think not.

Pastor Brian



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

Coffee Hour Hosts

5/7	Board of Trustees
5/14	Board of Deacons
5/21	Financial Secretaries/Treasurers
5/28	Stewardship Committee
6/4	Board of Ed (BOCE)

Church World Service

The CWS Blankets Program (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 First Congregational 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!



POTLUCK DINNER

Join us at our monthly potluck suppers and book/movie club - "Dinner and Discussion" (also known as "Spirit Supper"). The next get together will be on **Tuesday, May 16th, beginning at 6 p.m.** when we will discuss the book, *All I Really Need to Know I Learned in Kindergarten* by Robert Fulghum. Here Fulghum engages us with musings on life, death, love, pain, joy, and sorrow. All are welcome!

JOB POSTING

Part-time Church Sexton

We are accepting resumes for consideration as part-time Church Sexton. Position requires approximately 15 hours per week.

Will be responsible for general custodial duties for the church. A detailed job description is available upon request. Please submit resume to the attention of the Board of Trustees.

SPECIAL MAY COMMUNITY SUPPER

Our next Community Supper will be held on Saturday, May 20th, at 5 p.m. Thank you to the Stewardship Committee for agreeing to serve at this supper. This is not a church fundraiser, but a special outreach supper (by ticket only). 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, 508-832-2845. Thank you!

SERMON TITLES FOR MAY

5/7 "A Moment of Peace, but only a Moment"
5/14 "A Child Is a Gift"

5/21 "The Days Are Coming"
5/28 "Theophilus"
Children's Time: "Remembering"



May is Arthritis Awareness Month, Better Hearing and Speech Month, Food Allergy Action Month, and Global Employee Health and Fitness Month. It is also Healthy Vision Month, Hepatitis Awareness Month, Melanoma/Skin Cancer Detection and Prevention Month, Mental Health Month, National Asthma and Allergy Awareness Month. It is also National Osteoporosis Month, National Physical Fitness and Sports Month, National Stroke Awareness Month and Ultraviolet Awareness Month.

May 5 is Hand Hygiene Day.

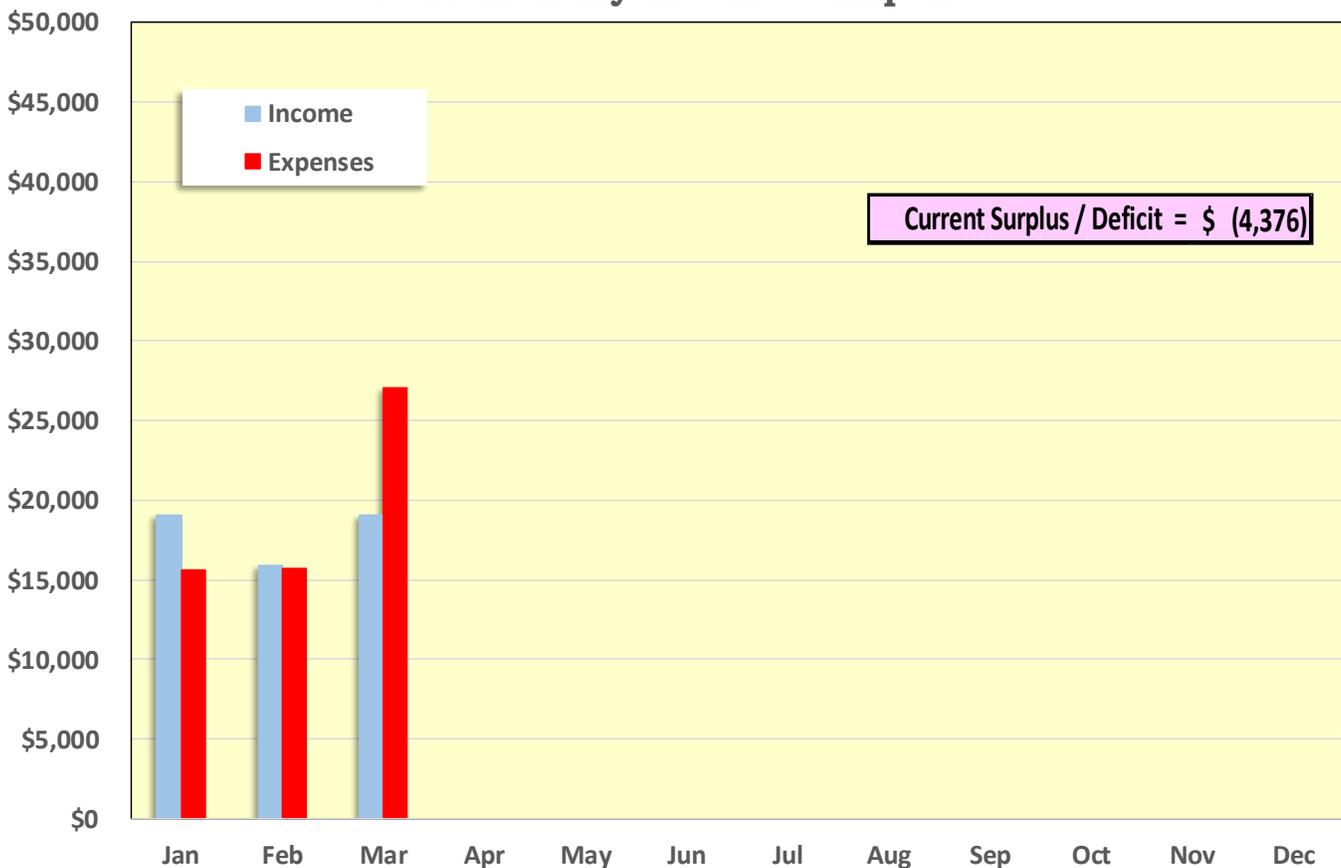
The sun is getting stronger, so we should all be wearing sunglasses to protect our eyes and sunscreen to protect ourselves from skin cancers.

God Bless!

Debbie Pranaitis, Parish Nurse
Cell: 508-612-4521

BELOW IS OUR MONTHLY FINANCIAL “SNAPSHOT”

**First Congregational Church
2017 Monthly Income & Expenses**



FROM THE DIRECTOR OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Happy Mother's Day to all the Moms! I can say with 80% certainty that we have seen the last of the snow for a while (it is New England so anything goes). The weather has been beautiful and the scent of the new flowers is all around. Enjoy His gift to us all and spend some time outside.

I would like to thank all of you who contributed to the flowers that my family and I presented to Worcester Fellowship on Easter Sunday. The weather was wonderful and the service was very moving and the living cross has a beautiful and important part in the service. We went to three services on Easter and, although the message was the same, the atmosphere and what I took from each service was unique to each situation. My kids have already asked to go again next year.

Sunday School May 7

I would like to have a brief meeting for potential teachers or assistants. If you are interested, please see Mike Schillinger or me. The kids seem to enjoy the new curriculum and it is very user friendly.

Confirmation Sunday May 21

The 3 young ladies that met for the first time back in September are more than ready to be involved and informed members of our congregation. Whether learning the Ten Commandments, Apostle Creed, writing their own statements of faith, participating in church life, or serving the homeless in Boston, these ladies worked together and were a positive representation of our congregation. I know that some of the situations were new and a little scary to them, but they worked together and met every challenge with grace. I am so proud of each of them and how far they have progressed in their walk with our Lord. Please join me in welcoming each of them.



Children's Sunday June 4

Please enjoy our annual cookout on the front lawn after the service. We ask that you sign-up to bring a salad or dessert to share and let us know the number attending in your group so we can plan enough food. In years past we have had wonderful weather with tug-a-war and 3-legged races. Please consider spending some extra time with your church family before the congregation "slims out" for the summer months.

May your days be filled with blessings and your nights be restful and rejuvenating. He is Risen, Hallelujah!!

Jean McPherson
Director of Religious Education

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 14th!



BAKE SALE

Quote of the Month:

"Choose to be rich by making your wants few" - unknown

(Our thanks to Mark Jordan for passing this pearl of wisdom onto us.)

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



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 March 31st, to do fingerprinting of all graduating four-year-olds. Thank you to all community groups for their continued support.

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

We still have openings for three and four-year-olds, spread the word. Graduations will be done during the day, the first full week of June.

We are pleased to announce that Cristi Corey will be the new director for **Here We Grow** starting June 19th, 2017.

I would like to thank you for all your support over the last two years. It has been a pleasure to be part of such a wonderful school.

Until next month, enjoy spring —

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

Making It Real — A Beautiful Day in our Neighborhood!

The Annual Business Meeting of the Central Association

Massachusetts Conference, United Church of Christ

Sunday, May 7, 2017

Original Congregational Church, UCC
1 East Street, Wrentham, MA 02093



The Program: 3:30-4:00 **Registration**

4:00-5:15 **Calling the Roll of Churches and Business Meeting**

Welcome and Opening Prayer

Annual Central Association Business Meeting

Association Reports and Budget

Installation of Central Association Officers and Committee Members

Topics to be discussed:

Season of Discernment

Making It Real Campaign

Honoring Choices Program

Association Church Cluster Meetings

5:15-6:00 **Worship — The Just Peace Players**

6:00 **Dinner**

To register go to: <https://macucc-reg.brtapp.com/CentralAssociationAnnualMeeting~May012017>

Cluster Meetings for Churches - In an effort to strengthen the covenant between churches, the association, and the Massachusetts Conference, the Rev. Kelly Gallagher along with the Association Board of Directors started a new initiative. Local churches are invited to attend an area meeting; taking place once a month geographically around the association, with a goal of churches attending one of the meetings each year.

The vision of the Board of Directors is to have at least 2 to 3 church representatives attend these area meetings, as well as the minister if possible. Those in attendance are able to ask the Rev. Kelly Gallagher, Associate Conference Minister, and the Board of Directors questions regarding church issues. Participants are also informed on how the conference and association can help churches with their mission. Below Cindy Ryan describes her experience at a recent Cluster Meeting she attended.

When I volunteered to attend the UCC Cluster Meeting on April 6th, I had no expectation of what it would involve. To my surprise, I found it fascinating to hear other area churches' mission statements and goals. (By the way, I found our mission statement to be one of the best!)

Some churches are spending most of their time simply trying to exist. One church has 12 voting members!! One church GAVE THEIR BUILDING AWAY – along with a portion of their \$5 million endowment – so that they could better focus on doing the work that they felt God intended them to do. Some have no minister, some are multi-denominational (I still can't quite figure out how that works, especially when one denomination is not Christian).*

When each church was asked to give a key word or phrase to describe their church and its purpose, some of the answers were: prayer, connections, growth, community outreach, questioning believer, welcoming, and a flock of shepherds – not sheep.

I have already mentioned that it was fascinating to me – but more important, it was inspirational. I strongly suggest that any of you attend in the future.

God bless,
Cindy Ryan

* Pastor's Note: running a church with multiple denominations can be interesting (that is hard) but the most important thing is that the people in the pews get along together. If they can get along together, the denominations can. But if the people in the pews can't get along, it doesn't matter how close or far apart the denominations are; it just won't work.



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.

Pastor Brian had asked me to give an update on the work at Walking Together. I thought that a recent report to the board from Pastor Meredyth would be just the thing. — Steve Hill

It has been busy lately at Walking Together. The combination of wind and cold has made us the shelter of choice for a lot of people. Every morning we offer coffee and snacks to folks walking by. While the number varies from day to day, we can have up to 35 people coming in. Some, like Eric, the kung-fu master, have serious mental illness, others are looking for community. Still others need a place to charge their phones, check their mail, and pick up condoms. Often we talk with our visitors about the work of recovery, and sometimes help them get to detox.

Our ESL classes continue to be a source of joy. Last week we had three things going on at once—we used a laptop to connect Maria to an online class which she needed for her GED preparation. She is a student at Quinsigamond Community College. We worked with other students on prepositions, acting out over, under, between and other concepts. And we had the children of two of the students working on their homework and reading with one of the volunteers. We are blessed with wonderful volunteers. Five people from four different churches are with us regularly.

It is wonderful to see how people in the community are claiming our space. The folks who do the exercise class have put up several pictures on our walls. Members of the 12 step groups leave encouraging slogans on the white board. Our gratitude wall has regular additions.

The 12 step groups continue to grow. Last week we had three newcomers picking up 24 hour chips at the Tuesday night AA meeting. One of the women has come to be with us during the morning drop-in times—it is a safe and welcoming space for her. She was delighted that she could bring her young daughter with her. The play corner is a draw for a lot of folks, both in the morning and during meetings.

This month I was invited to talk to a Holden girl scout troop about the work we do. They were eager to ask questions, and want to do a service project with us. They are going to put together craft kits for Laundry Love, and one of the group leaders took information about our wish list for the center. The Holden schools collect personal care items for non-profits, and she hopes to add us to the list.

The people of Immanuel Lutheran in Holden continue to provide snacks and toiletries for us. They dropped off a car load a couple of weeks ago, and then sent more with me when I spoke to the girl scouts.

I preached at St. Francis Church in Holden this past weekend. Two of our board members joined me for the forum, and helped tell the story of Laundry Love. St. Francis is considering helping with coffee supplies and supporting a month of Laundry Love. I gave out lots of business cards with the donation information. Hopefully, that will translate into an infusion of funds.

We continue to be a loaves and fishes operation, sharing what we have and receiving gifts in return. When we have extra laundry detergent we bring it to the food bank at Sacred Heart Church, and they, in return, give us juice boxes when they have extras. Some of our larger bottles of toiletries go out to the local sober houses, so the residents can perhaps work a few less hours and make a few more meetings.

Meredyth

Get Your “From our Pumpkin Patch” Cookbook Here!!

Our cookbook contains over 200 recipes! In addition to “Our Favorite Pumpkin Recipes” section, we have Appetizers & Beverages, Soups & Salads, Vegetables & Side Dishes, Main Dishes, Breads & Rolls, Desserts, Cookies & Candy, and “This & That” (miscellaneous recipes that don’t quite fit into the other categories).

At \$15 apiece, they will make a great addition to your own kitchen library as well as a wonderful gift for any occasion - a birthday, anniversary or bridal shower gift or a holiday gift for Mother’s Day or Christmas...

Need additional incentive? This is a church fundraiser — a portion of each cookbook sold goes to the church’s general fund. Cookbooks are available for purchase during coffee hours or call Michele at 508-259-2239.

You may also email her at library@auburnfirstucc.org. Please include “cookbook” in the subject line of your email. Please note: if the cookbook will be shipped, there will be a flat rate shipping charge of \$7.20 per USPS priority envelope. The envelopes can accommodate up to 2 cookbooks. — Happy Cooking!!

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

SATURDAY, JUNE 17th, 8 A.M. to 2 P.M.



Mark your calendars for our **Community Yard Sale on June 17th** and begin setting aside items. As we've done in the past, we will rent spaces and tables, plus we'll do all the advertising, and remember, our prime location can't be beat! Sort those items now and prepare to turn that "trash" into "treasure." 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 on Friday night (the 16th), help serve and clean refreshment tables, help clean-up and return tables inside at the end of the day on Saturday, 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 hamburgers, hot dogs and strawberry shortcake.

Remember to invite lots of friends and family to join you!

Returning this year we will be having a church table at the yard sale, so when doing your spring cleaning, keep the church in mind. Your items may be dropped off after June 4th. Please make sure your items are clean and in working order. Books will also be accepted.

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.
Email: secretary@auburnfirstucc.org
or PastorBrian@auburnfirstucc.org

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

Web: auburnfirstucc.org



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Auburn, Mass

May 2017						
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28	29	30	31			

OR CURRENT RESIDENT