
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:

Mother and Child

I hear time and again that the Covid epidemic was especially hard on women. Women were more likely to lose their job; they were more likely to work in health care and other essential jobs. The epidemic was even worse for women who are mothers to young children. With schools closed and grandmothers being vulnerable, mothers had even more of the childcare responsibility fall on their shoulders alone.

It truly takes a village to raise a child. This has always been true. Despite the myth we tell of housewives in the 1950's, even these women raised their children with the help of the neighborhood.

When I was growing up in the 70's and early 80's, we kids travelled the neighborhood all day, stopping here and there as the mood struck. I knew all my friends' moms and knew the rules in all their houses. Some were shoes off, others shoes on. Some you could grab a snack, others you needed permission before you ate anything. Some thought a carrot was a snack, others had cookies.

In the summer I ate most meals in a house other than my own. The town of Errol, and especially my friends' moms, raised me as much as my mom did.

Children are a lot of fun, especially if you can tell them to go home and they leave for another home. So share your kids with the neighbors. Walk around with your kid saying hi to people. Two to twelve-year-old kids make friends easy. Much easier than adults.

As I have said in an earlier *Tidings* message, I miss seeing children in the neighborhood. Today kids seem to spend more time inside or behind the backyard fence.

One thing I hope we learn from this crisis is that human contact is important for mental health and development. Kids should feel and BE safe in their neighborhood and, if it isn't safe, we as adults should make it safe.

May God bless and keep you,

Pastor Brian



JOIN US FOR:

Sunday Worship Services beginning at 10 a.m.
Sunday School on the front lawn also begins at 10 a.m. (weather permitting).

UPCOMING MAY SERMON TOPICS

- May 2 “What Is To Prevent Me from Being Baptized?”
- May 9 “The Story of Hannah”
- May 16 “Jesus’ Departing Prayer”
- May 23 “Ascension”
- May 30 “Trinity, Three in One”



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

Paul and Diane Moore will be celebrating their anniversary on May 10th. Congratulations, Paul and Diane!

Dear Friends,

On behalf of our entire family, we would like to thank you for all of your prayers, cards, caring words, and kindnesses after the death of my father. We are comforted knowing that our parents are now reunited in their forever home.

We are truly blessed to have such a caring church family.

In Christ,
Pam and Marty Tentor

*Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life,
and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever. Psalm 25:6*

YOU'RE INVITED!

We are happy to announce the return of our weekly "Fellowship on the Lawn" gatherings on Thursday afternoons beginning May 6th! This year we will be gathering on the church's front lawn at 2 p.m. instead of 1 p.m. All are welcome to join in on the fun. Please remember your lawn chair and a drink for yourself. (During inclement weather, we will cancel.)



Please mark your calendars for **Sunday, June 6th**, and plan to join us as we celebrate our children on

CHILDREN'S SUNDAY!

This year, instead of having our usual cookout, we are asking families to bring a picnic lunch for their family, and we can all share time together in fellowship on the lawn.



Here We Grow Preschool

What a difference a year makes. Last year at this time we found out that the state of Massachusetts was shutting down schools for the rest of the school year; this year many schools are just now getting back to in-person learning. While we are still dealing with covid and a lot of safety restrictions, we have come a long way this year.

We have all gotten used to new routines in and out of the classroom. We admit that it was tough in the beginning, but we persevered and are still going strong. The vaccine is widely available and, while it's not required at this time, the *Here We Grow* staff have all chosen to get it. We are not completely out of the woods yet, but we are feeling confident knowing that we have done our part to help keep our students safe and have provided a measure of normalcy in otherwise abnormal times.

I know that many activities are returning to normal, but I wanted to share some of our favorite activities that get the kids up and moving, especially on those cool, rainy, spring days. Building an obstacle course, either indoors or outside, is a lot of fun and simple to do using everyday items. Dancing, just put on any music and get grooving, or play the freeze dance by randomly stopping the music and striking a pose. To practice shape/letter/number recognition write numbers/letters or draw shapes on the driveway and hop from one to another and call out the name of what you land on.

Some other less active activities that we love, playdoh! It is so great for increasing finger/hand strength as well as their imaginations. Add some child safe scissors to the playdoh and practice cutting. Getting a lot of junk mail? Let your little ones help rip it up. Show them how to use their pointer and thumb to grab the top of the paper and tear, such a huge lesson to learn, especially when it comes to opening juice box straws. I love using washable markers on my windows, or sliding glass door. We play tic-tac-toe, practice letter/number formation, and it's so easy to clean. And, always Read, Read, Read, there is nothing better.

Need a break from cooking dinner? * * * **Once again we will be hosting a PAPA GINO'S FUNDRAISER. It will be on May 18, 4-9PM! Mention Here We Grow when ordering, and we will receive 20% of each order.** * * *

As always thank you for your continued support of Here We Grow, stay safe and healthy.

Cristi Corey
Director, **Here We Grow** Preschool

HERE WE GROW FUNDRAISER — Gotsneakers?

A sneaker recycling organization, Gotsneakers?, will pay Here We Grow for their donations of new and used wearable, reusable athletic sneakers and cleats. Acceptable items include: casual sneakers, walking sneakers, running sneakers, basketball sneakers, skateboard sneakers, sports cleats (rubber soccer and baseball ONLY; non-metal bottoms), and canvas sneakers (ONLY Converse All-Star brand canvas sneakers are accepted.) Please NO baby/toddler footwear.

Look for a collection box in fellowship hall or drop donations off to the church office, Monday-Friday, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Thank you to all who have given so far and for any future support! This fundraiser is expected to run at least through the school year in June.





Deaths in Our
Church Family

Please join us in prayer for the following families who have recently suffered the loss of loved ones.

Deborah L. “Debbie” (Brothers) Mahlert, 62, longtime Auburn resident, passed unexpectedly on Thursday, April 8, 2021 in the comfort of her home.

She leaves her beloved husband, and high school sweetheart, Mark A. Mahlert; her mother, Jean E. (Marvin) Brothers, of Auburn; her loving sons, Andrew E. Mahlert and his significant other, Tracy Fortier, of Auburn, and David C. Mahlert and his wife, Holly Mahlert, of Millbury; her six grandchildren, Devin, Collin, Rylan, Lily-Kate, Aaron, and Khloe; her sister and best friend, Linda J. Mahlert, and her husband, Gordon, of Auburn; her two goddaughters, Shantelle Anderson and Stacie Cone; her godson, Michael Cohen-Brothers; and several nieces and nephews; as well as her church family.

Debbie was predeceased by her infant daughter, Katelyn L. Mahlert; her father, Edward C. Brothers; and her brother, Douglas E. “Doug” Brothers.

Born in Worcester, raised and educated in Auburn, she was a 1977 graduate of Auburn High School. Debbie then dedicated almost three decades of her career in the Auburn Public Schools, from which she retired as Manager of Food Service. After retirement, Debbie helped with the family business, Little Diggers Construction LLC. On May 13th, she would have celebrated 43 years with her beloved, Mark.

Debbie was a woman of strong faith, being a loyal member of our Church. She also was a member of the choir and served on many committees here at the church.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to the American Heart Association (www2.heart.org).

A funeral service was held at our church on April 13, 2021 followed by burial in Hillside Cemetery, alongside her daughter Katelyn.

Duayne E. “Dee” (Childs) Rieder, 83, of Auburn, passed unexpectedly on Monday, April 12, 2021, in the comfort of her home.

She leaves her beloved husband, Ray M. Rieder; her loving sons, Scott M. Rieder and his wife Dianne, of Cherry Valley, and Mark A. Rieder and his wife Cheryl, of Plymouth; her grandchildren: Joshua, Andrew and his wife Jessyca, and Rachel Rieder, of Plymouth, Sarah McGrail and her husband Matthew, of Beverly, Danielle Rieder, of Worcester, and Michael Rieder, of Dover, NH; a great-granddaughter, Claire McGrail; her brother, Jim Childs, of Broadview Heights, OH; and several nieces and nephews. Along with her parents, the late Clifford R. Childs and Ann B. (McCarly) Childs, Dee was predeceased by her sister, Joann (Childs) Stagneth, of Avon Lake, OH.

Born in Jamestown, NY, she was raised in Cleveland, OH. She graduated from John Marshall High School where she met her future husband. She then furthered her education by completing secretarial school. After completing school, Dee and Ray started their family in Parma Heights, OH.

As her family grew, Dee worked as a secretary for the Auburn school district, and later when the family relocated to Plymouth, MA she was an administrative assistant for Ocean Spray Cranberries. She achieved the position of first assistant to the CEO before retiring.

After retirement, Ray and Dee moved back to Auburn. She spent her time volunteering with the Auburn Woman’s Club and the local Project Linus chapter. In her free time, she enjoyed family get-togethers, road trips, cruises, and travel of any kind.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made in Dee’s honor to Dementia Society of America - PO Box 600, Doylestown, PA 18901.

A memorial service will be held here at the church on Saturday, May 1st at 1 PM.

Also, please be in prayer for the **Kulesa family** due to the recent passing of Marilyn’s husband, **Al Kulesa**, and for the **Guilford family** on the loss of their nephew, Melynn’s sister, Cindy, and brother-in-law, Mark’s, son.



Happy Spring! Hopefully its arrival helps everyone's psyche. Soon we will start the lawn chair meetings (May 6 at 2 p.m.) and all are invited.

May is Arthritis Awareness Month, National Stroke Awareness Month, ALS Awareness Month, National Celiac Disease Awareness Month, Brain Tumor Awareness Month, and Healthy Vision Month. It is also Melanoma/Skin Cancer Detection and Prevention Month, National Asthma and Allergy Awareness Month, National Osteoporosis Month, and Mental Health Month.

In the above mentioned awarenesses, we have had church family members with several of them. This time it really struck me how close these awarenesses have affected us. It's a wake up call for me, and I hope for you as well. I know that we have to take care of ourselves first in order to help others. I also need to remind myself of that. Please take care of yourself; I'm trying to follow that advice as well. A good start is to get outside on a good day and enjoy God's beauty.

By now most of us have been able to get the vaccine. I have completed mine with no side effects at all. I've heard of some of our church family getting Covid-19 and with flu like symptoms. I don't know of anyone who had to be hospitalized. I think we still need to take precautions, but I think we're making progress.

God Bless! Stay safe!

Debbie Pranaitis, Parish Nurse

Cell #: 508-612-4521



We would like to thank everyone for all of the love and support we have received from our Church family during this time of loss.

Your concern, expressed through cards, prayers, flowers, donations, and meal preparation, is greatly appreciated.

We will miss Debbie immensely.

The Mahlert - Brothers Family

BELL CHOIR SCHEDULE

- 5/2 Rehearsal following worship service
- 5/9 Play at 10 a.m. worship service
Rehearsal following the service
- 5/16 Rehearsal following worship service
- 5/23 Rehearsal following worship service
- 5/30 Play at 10 a.m. service (no rehearsal)

Join us for Sunday School on the Lawn!
We continue to hold Sunday School outside on the front lawn beginning at 10 a.m. Jean has planned crafts/games for each Sunday with a focus on getting the kids together to just have some fun. In the event the weather is bad, we will cancel for the week.

From the Director of Religious Education

Spring is FINALLY here and, hopefully, the snow is gone until November. **We are gearing up to start CONFIRMATION CLASSES IN THE FALL**, so if you have a child/grandchild who is in 9th grade or older and is interested, please see Pastor Brian or me.

We started "Lawn Sunday school" on April 18 to a particularly good response. I hid sections of the Lord's Prayer around the front lawn and the kids had to work together to find the pieces and then put them all together correctly. Just to make it interesting, I threw in words from other prayers/commandments. It was remarkable to watch how the kids would piece it together and then have extra pieces that they "knew went in there somewhere." So, they would all say the prayer again to find out what was missing. We had kids from 1st grade – middle school and all were able to contribute.



We plan on having "LAWN SUNDAY SCHOOL" right up until CHILDREN'S SUNDAY on June 6, weather permitting.

Children's Sunday will look different this year due to Covid restrictions. Instead of our usual cookout put on by the Board of Ed, we are inviting ALL church members to bring a picnic lunch and sit on the lawn for a good old-fashioned church picnic. We will still be handing out Bibles for those kids leaving 3rd grade and the kids who will be entering 5th grade, because they were unable to have them presented last year. Please see me if your child is eligible, so I make sure I do not miss anyone.

Have a wonderful month and enjoy the sunshine. His glory is for us ALL.

Jean McPherson, Director of Religious Education

FLOWERS, GET YOUR FLOWERS HERE!

For several years now, Christine Suprenant has generously donated hundreds of dollars' worth of annuals to our plant sale *EACH* year. She has well-stocked greenhouses on her property in Leicester with a good selection of annuals and vegetables along with some unusual varieties of petunias and geraniums. She is open every day beginning in May until early June. If you need to shop for plants for your yard or the cemetery, please check out what Chris has to offer. Her geraniums are awesome! To get there, take Rt. 56 out of Leicester Center towards Paxton. She is located on Whittemore St. in Leicester, which is a left hand turn off Route 56, shortly before Hot Dog Annie's, and just past the high school. About a 1/4 mile from 56, her greenhouses are on the left, next to a blue cape house. Parking is across the street. If you go, please let Chris know you are from the church and thank her for her continued support. We can thank Shirley Hill for developing a relationship with Chris and making this possible for all these years!

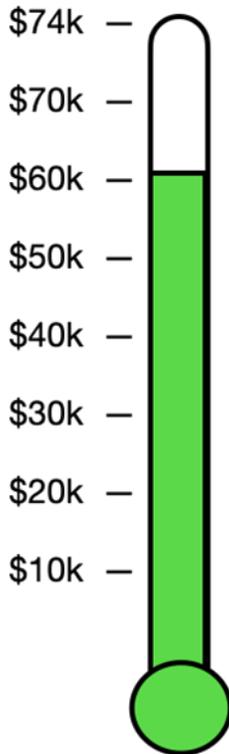


CALLING ALL GRADUATES . . . As we do every year, we would like to celebrate our high school and college graduates in our June newsletter. If you are aware of any students with ties to First Congregational who will be graduating this spring, please email Denise at: secretary@auburnfirstucc.org or call 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.

First Congregational Church Boiler Fund

Pledge Goal: **\$74,137**

Pledge Total: **\$60,839**
82% of goal



Thank you, once again, to all who have pledged to the Capital Campaign so far. As promised, we are including in the monthly *Tidings* and weekly bulletins a moving thermometer to show our progress on this campaign. We are now looking for approximately \$13,000 to help return the borrowed funds to the church's invested funds.

Remember, you may pledge over the 3 year plan*, make a one time donation, or donate from your own invested funds to this project.

Thank you,
The Board of Trustees

* Please complete the pledge portion below if you would like to pledge over the 3 year plan.

Please complete this pledge form and return as soon as possible to church address below.

I answer the Trustees' call to support financially the New Boiler Project.

As part of my response, I will give \$_____ as my (circle one)

Weekly / Monthly / Quarterly / Annual contribution

for a total of \$_____ during 2021 through 2023.

Name _____

Street _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Please return to: First Congregational Church, 128 Central St., Auburn, MA 01501

**COMMUNITY YARD SALE — PLANT SALE!!!
SATURDAY, JUNE 12TH ~ 8 A.M. TO 2 P.M. ~ RAIN OR SHINE**



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? Store those items and plan to join us on the Church lawn for **OUR COMMUNITY YARD SALE on June 12th!** 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! **We will also have a church table and will be accepting donations.** Please **NO** computer equipment, TV's, clothing, or VCR tapes. Thank you.

Also, when separating perennials in your gardens, **please keep the plant sale in mind** and pot up a few to donate. The plants are a huge part of the church's profits.

Since we've all been cooped up for so long, we are expecting a large turnout. So, please mark your calendars and plan to support this church fundraiser by renting a space or volunteering to help at the yard sale - plant sale.

SPACES ARE \$20 FOR CHURCH MEMBERS & \$25 FOR NON-MEMBERS.

TABLES ARE AVAILABLE TO RENT FOR \$5 EACH.

Call Cindy Dube at 508-832-6646 or the church office, 508-832-2845, to reserve your spot!



***** DON'T PROCRASTINATE! WE ALREADY HAVE 21 SPOTS RENTED! *****

TIDINGS is a monthly publication of
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 United Church of Christ**
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*God's church in Auburn Center
 doing Christ's work in the world.*
Web: auburnfirstucc.org



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OR CURRENT RESIDENT