

november
2009

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!'"

Please join us November 8th for a special worship service with the musical group, Downpour.

Downpour is a contemporary youth guitar band ministry of Millbury Federated Church. A few years ago, church leaders took a look around and realized they didn't have the personnel to put together a sports ministry for kids, or a homework help ministry, or anything like that. But they did have some musicians who were willing to spend time with kids and pass on what they knew about playing and singing and leading worship. It's worked. Not only have they taught a bunch of youth guitar, and bass, and drums, and singing, and facilitating contemporary worship, they've watched three of them go on to major in music in college and the one who has finished college is now pursuing employment in a music related vocation.

Downpour's mission is to create the kind of worship environment where the grace, love, joy and Spirit of the Living God are set free to *pour down* upon the community in worship. The group features electric and acoustic guitars, drums and bass. (A free will offering will be taken.)

Coffee Hour Hosts

- 11/1 ~ Prudential Committee
- 11/8, 11/15 ~ Financial Secretaries/Treasurers
- 11/22, 11/29 ~ Music Committee
- 12/6, 12/13 ~ Nominating & Scholarship Committees

Worcester Area Mission Society, UCC cordially invites you to a reception honoring

Rev. Robert Bachelder



"Twenty-five years of Mission Service to the Wider Community"

Wednesday, November 4, 2009

Five Thirty to Eight in the Evening
Refreshments will be served

First Congregational Church
1 Church Road, Shrewsbury, MA (center of town)

Donations toward a gift for Bob (make checks payable to WAMS) may be mailed to Donna Enberg, Treas., P.O. Box 403, Holden, MA 01520

To RSVP or for more information, contact Sandra Longvall-Johnson at VASAGOO@aol.com

Community Thanksgiving Eve Service

Wednesday, November 25th at 7:30 p.m.



THANKSGIVING SERVICE

**First Congregational Church,
128 Central Street
Auburn, MA**

Come and join us as we give thanks to our God!

All are welcome.

Can you believe Thanksgiving is fast approaching, and soon Christmas will follow? With Christmas around the corner it's time to think about poinsettias. Once again we are offering the opportunity to purchase poinsettias at great prices. In the past we've decorated the sanctuary with these beautiful plants and at the close of the Christmas Eve Candlelight Service members are able to claim their plants and continue to enjoy them in their own homes, or give them as gifts when visiting loved ones on Christmas Day. You can dedicate your poinsettias in memory of a loved one, or in celebration of a special occasion, etc. These dedications will be printed and included as an insert in our Christmas bulletins.



Below is a poinsettia order form. Just fill it out (please print) and return it to the church either by mail, or in person. Just be sure to place your order early for best selection.

Please note all orders are due before Thanksgiving.



2009 Christmas Poinsettia Order

Poinsettia Given By: PLEASE PRINT

Name: _____

Phone: _____

In Memory of _____

or

In Celebration of _____

Size:

1 stem 6-1/2" pot \$11.00

Color: Red _____ Pink _____ White _____

2 stems 8" pot \$17.00

Color: Red _____ Pink _____ White _____

4 stems 10-1/2" pot \$28.00

Color: Red _____ Pink _____ White _____

_____ Sometimes people are unable to collect their poinsettia after the Christmas services. Please check here if you want the Deacons to bring your poinsettia to be donated to a shut-in or another member of the church family.

Our supplier, Rob Kustigian, has notified us that the poinsettias are beautiful this year. Please submit your order before Thanksgiving so that you may hopefully receive your first choice. Checks should be made payable to First Congregational Church. If you have questions call Connie or Ron Hanks at 508 -832-4227.

WAITING ... and other counter -cultural disciplines

Reflections from your Interim Pastor, Rev. Mark Seifried

Wait for the Lord; be strong, and let your heart take courage; wait for the Lord! Psalm 27:14

When I left the restaurant business, I vowed to myself that I would stop wearing a watch on a regular basis. As a manager, I not only had to be concerned with my own timeliness, I had to keep up with my assistant managers and employees' punctuality. I had to keep track of the time it took for a server to greet customers, take their drink orders, return with their drink order, get their bread (actually down South, we served biscuits!) take the food orders and more. Every step of the dining experience had a standard for timing. If we couldn't make those times, we considered ourselves failures. Why? Because people hate to wait.

You know it's true. We all try to beat yellow traffic lights when we can, and then we zip away from the light as soon as we can. God help the person who doesn't see the light change. The wrath of Satan is unleashed with honking horns, swearing and hand signals. We are a culture of instant gratification. We want things now and we hate to wait. People who are otherwise kind turn into tyrants when they have to wait. It's almost as if Americans believe the Constitution has one of the inalienable rights (or are those in the Declaration of Independence?) to be free of delays.

It seems strange for me to be writing about Advent now close to the newsletter deadline of October 22nd (We make deadlines because people wait till the last minute!) before Halloween, and Thanksgiving, but I feel the need. I don't want to wait any longer because the date will be here before we know. I understand that I may have "hurt people" last year by making them wait to sing Christmas carols until Christmas. I'm sorry if that is the case. When I began my ministry at the church I was told that it was a liturgical church that followed the church year that millions of other churches around the globe follow. On that calendar, there are four weeks of Advent. My dictionary of religion says, "Advent is the month of penitential [self-examination] preparation [waiting] before the celebration of the feast of Christmas."

How we wait and prepare matters. If we wait by only marking time, counting down the days, or distracting ourselves with all the glitzy pretties the retailers have to offer, December 25th will come and go, but we will not experience Christmas. In order to experience Christmas, we have to wait actively for it instead of passively allowing it to come. We have to dig deep and understand our impatience. We have to say, "We will not succumb to the cultural sins of instant gratification." Theologian Marjorie Suchocki says that "Advent is an active waiting; we participate in the works of God within ourselves and within our world. While waiting for Advent, we give ourselves up to God's use for goodness."

As Pastor Alison Young wrote, "Actively waiting is one of the most difficult parts of being human. It means fully expecting and hoping for something to happen, but being completely open to what that is and how it looks and when it happens. Actively waiting requires relinquishing control. It requires vulnerability. It requires being open to the struggles that go along with learning more about ourselves – and God. But, learning to actively wait can also be one of the most rewarding parts of being human. Learning to actively wait changes us. It allows us to find joy in the unlikeliest of places. It teaches us more about who we are, and who God is."

So, as the secular world starts singing "Silent Night" on November 1st, we will wait. As Advent comes around and we all squirm because the Advent hymns and themes of the scriptures are designed to make us do just that, we will wait. While the kids complain that they can't open their gifts until Christmas, we will wait. It will take courage and patience, which our culture doesn't value, but we will wait. Perhaps in our waiting, we will find out what some folks did one night long ago in Bethlehem. Christ was worth waiting for! We weren't prepared back then. Will we be this year? I can't wait for Advent!

POST SCRIPT: As always, I love to hear all kinds of feedback. Please come directly to me should any concerns arise and I promise that I will deal directly with them. I cannot operate off hearsay. Otherwise, I'd spend all my time thinking about myself rather than the One who called me to ministry and the ones I serve: you! I do listen and respond to honest, constructive criticism. God knows and most of you know: I need and will accept all the help I can get. I need Advent, too! Come, Lord Jesus come. We wait for your salvation.



November is American Diabetes Month, COPD (Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease) Awareness Month, Lung Cancer Awareness Month, National Adoption Month, National Alzheimer's Disease Awareness Month, National Family Caregivers Month, National Healthy Skin Month, National Hospice and Palliative Care Month, Pancreatic Cancer Awareness Month and Pulmonary Hypertension Month. November 18th is Prematurity Awareness Day and World COPD Day. The 19th is The Great American Smoke out! November 22-28 is Gastroesophageal Reflux Disease Awareness Week.

There will be information on these subjects on the Health table in Fellowship Hall. Names have been sent to the Auburn Fire Chief to get trained on the defibrillator that is going to be donated to the church. If you have not signed up and would like to be trained please let me know, or you can call the church office and let Denise know. I don't have dates or times for the training yet.

The equipment in the closet has been coming and going, so if you need something please look in the closet and take what you need.

Happy Thanksgiving and let us all give thanks!

God Bless!

Debbie Pranaitis
Parish Nurse

Are you ready to share your time and talents towards the various missions and ministries of FCC?

The Nominating Committee would like to thank everyone who has stepped up to the plate sharing their time and talents towards the various missions and ministries of our church. This is not a commitment to be taken lightly and we appreciate your servitude toward the Lord and First Congregational Church.

The Lord gave each one of us many talents in order that we can serve Him. We have several openings for 2010 and know that you will be a perfect fit.

Please see any one of the Nominating Committee members to find out more about how you can help serve within our Church.

In His Love,

Your Nominating Committee:

Kay Shapter (Chair), Michele Schillinger and Pat Bukoski

If you haven't sent in your 2010 pledge card, please do so as soon as possible.

Thank you from the Stewardship Committee



Here We Grow Preschool

It is hard to believe that we are already into the third month of the school year. With only one month until the winter holiday programs, the children at HWG are very busy.

During the month of November **Here We Grow** will be talking with the children about: families, manners and the gift of giving. On November 23rd & 24th **Here We Grow** will come together to share a "feast" day. Following a tradition Fawn Robidoux began over twenty years ago, this year's menu is cornbread, made by the three-year-old children, a friendship fruit salad, cheese and crackers, turkey & ham, and brownies with cool whip; made by the four-year-old children. With the help of the **Here We Grow** parents (who will help serve the meal) it will be a rewarding day for all.

As in the past, the children and families will be participating in The Giving Basket. All foods collected will be given to Pastor Mark to distribute to families in need during the season of thanksgiving. We are very fortunate to have had so many supportive families. With the economy and loss of jobs, the need for donations is even greater.

During the month of October, we ran our first fundraiser, Hebert Candies. **Here We Grow's** profit should be just over \$3,000.00. This money is used for teaching materials, some special programs and classroom supplies. If we reach our goal, we will not have to do a fundraiser around the holidays. YEAH!!!

During the month of December, **Here We Grow** will also be participating in the Toys for Tots Campaign. We will be collecting unwrapped toys which the Marines will be stopping by to pick up and distribute.

Ending the year of 2009, HWG will be entertaining the families with holiday programs on December 21st & 22nd. We are hoping to have a special visitor on those days, time will tell. Another tradition HWG has always done is for the children to sing *Happy Birthday* to Baby Jesus. It is the one song they all know.

Until next month, enjoy the beautiful colors of fall and stay healthy.

Dawn Murphy, Director
Here We Grow Preschool



Happy Birthday wishes to:

Rich McPherson ~ Nov. 6th
 Nick Stockhaus ~ Nov. 7th
 Victoria Stockhaus ~ Nov. 14th
 Pearl Morrill ~ Nov. 17th
 Suzanne Kress ~ Nov. 22nd

If you want to help the church grow spiritually and numerically, please see Pastor Mark. He's taking a group to Topsfield for a program called *Unbinding the Gospel*, Friday, November 20 and Saturday November 21. We'll join others as we reclaim the practice of prayer, learn to tell faith stories, and invite others to church.

LEDGER 1773-1786

A few years ago I read and copied a ledger that was stored in the town hall basement. I don't believe this book has been read in the last two hundred years. It is a complete record of the step-by-step decisions made by our men in building our meetinghouse and forming our town.

The following is just one of a series of excerpts from these writings.

George DuHamel and Paula Lubin, Church Historians

State of Massachusetts Bay

Worcester, Sa. To Thomas Drury of Ward in the County of Worcester. Yeoman.
Greetings.

By virtue of a late Act of the Great and General Court of this State for the erecting & Incorporating out of the Towns of Worcester, Sutton, Oxford & Leicester a new Town by the name of Ward, directing & empowering One Edward Davis Esq., one of the Justices of the Peace for the County aforesaid to issue a Warrant directed to some principal Inhabitants within the town of Ward aforesaid, requiring him to warn a meeting of the inhabitants of S'd Ward, as set forth in S'd Act.

You are hereby required in the name of the gov't & people of the State of Massachusetts Bay fourthwith to warn the Inhabitants of the Town of Ward aforesaid Qualified to vote in Town Affairs to Assemble at the meeting-house in S'd Ward on Monday the fourth Day of May Next at nine of the clock in the forenoon.

First to choose a Moderator to manage Said meeting.

2ly to choose all such officers as the Law requires to manage ye Affairs of S'd Town for ye year ensuing.

And you are hereby required to Obtain of the Town Clerk of S'd Worcester, Sutton, Oxford & Leicester before the time of S'd meeting a copy of the last list of ye valuation of all Real & Personal Estates of ye Inhabitants of S'd Ward in order to determine the Qualification of voters of S'd meeting.

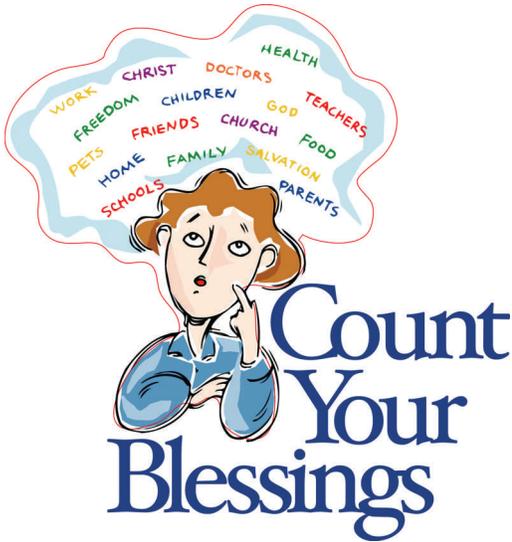
Herzof fail not but make due return of this Warrant with your doings thereom unto myself at or before the time mentioned.

Given under my hands and Seal the 13th Day of April 1778.

Edward Davis

Worcester, in Obedience to this Warrant, I have warned the Inhabitants as directed in this Warrant and have procured the Lists of Estates as set forth in S'd Warrant.

Per me
Thomas Drury



From the Director of Religious Education

Happy Fall! The pumpkins are carved and the holidays are coming. As you count your blessings this Thanksgiving season be sure to add in your child's Sunday School Teacher. These dedicated individuals come every Sunday morning and enrich the children's knowledge through stories and crafts. We are truly blessed to have them in our midst.

The Pageant is coming! - January 3rd after worship in Fellowship Hall. I would like to start rehearsals on November 1st at 9:30 a.m. for all speaking parts if possible. I will let you know if that will include your child/ren.

The youth picked out the pageant this year and we are in for a real treat. It is a musical called *Live from the Streets of Bethlehem*. Please put the date on your calendar and come support everyone's hard work.

May this Thanksgiving find you all filled with the blessings of our Lord.

Jean McPherson
Director of Religious Education

HELP US FEED THE LESS FORTUNATE

The Outreach Committee and I will be providing lunch for the congregation of Worcester Fellowship on Sunday November 8th on the common at City Hall. We are requesting monetary donations for lunch fixings, new white socks and t-shirts. Of course, anyone, and everyone is welcome and encouraged to join us for worship and to share the meal with Worcester Fellowship. Please see me or any member of the Outreach Committee.

Worcester Fellowship is a congregation of homeless and less fortunate people in the City of Worcester. Thank you for your help and support of this important ministry.

Jen Bohn

Mark your calendars for:

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH'S 9TH ANNUAL GOLF TOURNAMENT



Saturday, August 7, 2010 at 1 p.m.
at Pine Ridge Country Club in Oxford

From the Choir Room

This year the Choir will present *Lessons and Carols* for Christmas on December 20th. It is not a Cantata, but similar in length. The work selected is titled *Candles and Carols* and yes, we will have candles! As the title suggests, it is based on familiar Christmas Carols, as follows:

- | | |
|---------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1.) Light of Hope | <i>Come Thou long Expected Jesus</i> |
| 2.) Light of Peace | <i>Hark! The Herald Angels Sing</i> |
| 3.) Light of Joy | <i>While by the Sheep We Watched</i> |
| 4.) Light of Love | <i>Love Came Down at Christmas</i> |
| 5.) Light of Christ | <i>Silent Night</i> |

The congregation is welcome to close with us singing *Silent Night*.

We look forward to doing something a bit different this year - more intimate and familiar.

“Happy are those who live in your house, ever singing your praise.” — Psalm 84:4

Blessings,
Heather Moore
Minister of Music

Joyful Noyse Schedule

11/1, 8 & 15	11:15 a.m. rehearsal
11/22	9:15 a.m. rehearsal
	<i>Seek Ye First</i>
11/29	11:15 a.m. rehearsal

From the Stewardship Committee

As you know, our annual pledges provide for the operation of our Church and Church Life, as well as for the future of our Church, its members and children, and the various missions and ministries both within the church and beyond.

By pledging with our heart, and by meeting our obligations and responsibilities as members of the church, we build a strong and caring church able to meet the needs of its various ministries.

We'd like to take this time to thank you for your support and commitment to the First Congregational Church of Auburn for 2010.

In His Love,
Ron Klaucke (Chair), Mike Dube and Michele Schillinger

Library Tidings

by Gloria Whitehead

Had some bumps in the road when beginning to write this month's report. Suddenly, a "red light" appeared (figuratively speaking) so it seemed best to heed that first. Your libraries - Children and Adult - are blessed with many beautiful and outstanding books which have been gifted by members, non-members, authors and others. Our THANKS are perpetual.

In contrast, occasionally we've received books which, if not new or just like new, have been dropped off at, or close by, areas designated for book returns. As an example, a well-illustrated, hard cover FIRST BOOK of Prayers and Psalms, which was warped and had a few stuck pages, was left. It's understandable why the owner wanted to pass it on. It wasn't suitable for the library either. As always, a donor is also asked to write their name on a slip of paper and put it inside their donation. Many thanks for your cooperation as it has a worthy purpose.

Take a minute to run down this list of Thanksgiving books with brief descriptions! A perfect antidote for a family revival time after a hearty meal:

Children's - Preschool and Up

My First Thanksgiving - by Tomie dePaola - hard cover, his usual meaningful style of bringing simple tenderness into a child's holiday

Silly Tilly's Thanksgiving Dinner - by Lillian Hoban, an "I Can Read Book" for beginning readers - fun short story

The Very First Thanksgiving Day - by Rhonda Gowler Greene - Large print - gift of the Pranaitis Family with beautiful illustrations

Thanksgiving at the Tappletons' - by Eileen Spinelli - paperback - seemed like everything went wrong until Grandmother reminded everyone that there's more to Thanksgiving than a turkey and trimmings

The First Thanksgiving - by J.I. Anderson - paperback, simple illustrations - "I Can Read Story" - well-told

A Charlie Brown Thanksgiving - by Charles M. Schultz - paperback - great memories

A Turkey for Thanksgiving - by Eve Bunting - paperback, animal characters look everywhere for a turkey AND the TURKEY ATE DINNER with the gathering

Chester Chipmunk's Thanksgiving - by Barbara Williams - hard cover - Chester being nice, made a pecan pie for Cousin Archie for Thanksgiving dinner and then Archie didn't want to come - AND MORE

Older Young People

The Plymouth Thanksgiving by Leonard Weisgard - Story based on a diary of William Bradford

Turkey, Pilgrim and Indian Corn by Edna Garth - An amazing collection of Indian symbols and History; enlightening.

Margaret Pumphrey's Pilgrim Stories Begins in England. Author treats the Bradfords, Brewsters, Cowers and others so vividly that a reader shares their experiences with suspense.

May we be giving THANKS daily to God who guides and provides for us in many ways we never recognize. Also, may our country's Thanksgiving history be preserved.

Neighbors In Need - Another World Is Possible

The Neighbors in Need offering supports the UCC's ministries of justice and compassion throughout the United States. Two-thirds of the offering is used by the UCC's Justice and Witness Ministries to fund a wide array of local and national justice initiatives, advocacy efforts, and direct service projects. Through UCCTakeAction.org, our national Justice and Witness Ministries office offers resources, news updates, and action alerts on a broad spectrum of justice issues. Working with members of the UCC Justice and Peace Action Network (a network of thousands of UCC justice and peace advocates), Justice and Witness continues its strong policy advocacy work on issues such as the federal budget, voting rights, immigration, health care, hate crimes, civil liberties, and environmental justice.

Neighbors in Need also supports our American Indian neighbors in the UCC. One-third of the offering supports the UCC's Council for American Indian Ministries (CAIM). Historically, forebears of the UCC established churches and worked with Lakota, Dakota, Nakota, Mandan, Hidatsa, Arickara, and Hocak in North and South Dakota, Wisconsin, and northern Nebraska.

Today there are 20 UCC congregations on reservations and one urban, multi-tribal UCC congregation in Minneapolis, Minnesota. These churches and their pastors are supported by CAIM. CAIM is also an invaluable resource for more than 1,000 individuals from dozens of other tribes and nations who are members of other UCC congregations in the U.S.

Neighbors in Need helps make another world possible. It needs your support. You'll find an offering envelope enclosed in this month's *Tidings*. Please return it to the church, and thank you for your support.



It's fall again and people have been asking for Michele's traditional apple cake recipe that has been in her family for years. So, we are re-printing it for your convenience.

Liard Apple Cake

Preheat oven @ 350 degrees.

Ingredients:

3 Cups Flour

½ tsp Salt

1 tsp Baking Soda

2 tsp Cinnamon

3 Cups Unpeeled, Cored, Chopped Apples

3 Eggs

2 Cups Sugar

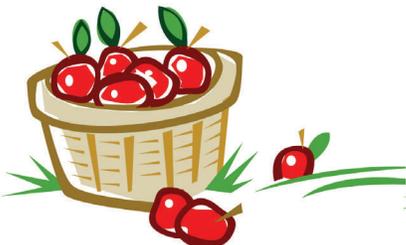
1 Cup Oil

2 tsp Vanilla

1 Cup Chopped Nuts (optional)

Sift dry ingredients into large bowl. Mix in apples & nuts. Beat eggs into sugar, one at a time until fluffy. Add Oil; beat well; add vanilla. Stir mixture into dry ingredients. Blend well. Batter will be stiff.

Pour into 13x9 pan or tube pan. Bake for 40 – 60 minutes until inserted toothpick comes out clean. Enjoy!



Stewardship Message

Remember to Keep It Personal

Then he will answer them, "Truly I tell you, just as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me."(Matthew 25:45)

This kid had a smile the size of Alaska. Probably eight or nine years old, he stood at my door with a rake twice his height. What he didn't have was a leaf bag. Neither did I on this windy Wednesday before Thanksgiving. Besides, my adult children promised that their contribution to the holiday was a day's yard work. The disappointed little boy trudged back up the driveway with drooping shoulders.

The familiar sheep and goats parable reminds us that when we feed one hungry person or make sure someone is clothed, sheltered, visited, healed, given hope, we are caring for Jesus Christ. Like most people, I've done those things through personal involvement or my checkbook. Faith practices of hospitality and justice include Thanksgiving baskets, mittens for the school mitten tree, board games for the correctional facility, phone calls and emails to friends or strangers for the prayer chain, and the sacrificial pledge I make this month to my church with its local mission and connection to so many places through Our Church's Wider Mission. I congratulate my sheeply self.

In this difficult financial year I've also learned a tougher lesson -- letting people support me, notice my occasional "least-ness."

But parables are supposed to pinch. The flip side of this one suggests that every lost opportunity to help one person rebuffs Christ. Sometimes I'm too tired for the phone call. Sometimes I don't want to share my privacy with a relative. Sometimes (at this season) my credit card feels wafer thin. Sometimes I don't spend five dollars for a big Alaska-size smile the day before Thanksgiving. Then I recognize the person walking away with the rake ... and I remember to keep it personal.

November 2009

God is still speaking,

**UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST**



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

CALLING ALL VETERANS

Boy Scout Troop 101 is looking to honor those who have served our country at a special Veterans' Day ceremony to be held here in Fellowship Hall on Veterans' Day, November 11th at 6:30 p.m. If you're a veteran, please call George at 774-239-2240.



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



**Our next Church Supper will be
Saturday, November 14th at 5 p.m.**

Menu: Roast Beef

Chef: Stan MacPhee

Servers: Volunteers Needed

Adults \$10 Children \$5

**There will be a slideshow of Bob &
Carol Luther's trip over the Oregon
Trail! So, please plan to join us!**



**PLEASE NOTE THE
DATE CHANGE**



*TIDINGS is a monthly
publication of*

**First Congregational
Church
128 Central St.
Auburn MA 01501**

Phone: (508)832-2845

Web: auburnfirstucc.org



BULK RATE
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Non-Profit Org.
Permit No. 6
Auburn, Mass

November 2009

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					