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# 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

This week is the Fall meeting of my Association (the collection of UCC churches mostly between 495 and Buzzards Bay along the Massachusetts South Coast). In preparation, we who are leading the meeting have been doing a lot of reading about what’s going on in our communities.

This kind of exploration is also part of the work of your Search Committee, as they prepare to search for a pastor who will both serve this church and the Auburn community. Sometimes it can be a challenge because most of us see what we know and love best, and often miss the changes that are happening. Or our memories trick us and we mistake the events of the past.

Fortunately, the Southern New England Conference provides us with access to demographic surveys of our communities to help us see our towns as new folks see them, help us determine what our town’s needs are, and sometimes help us see if our hopes and dreams are reasonable.

For instance, one church I served had been anxiously awaiting a new housing development to bring in new members. The surveys told us that the town was entirely built out, that there was no more land for large housing developments, and so there would be no influx of new folks from that source. Their search committee moved from looking for an extroverted person who would bring those new folks in to searching for a kind person who would help them put together programs to serve the people who already lived in their community. And with her leadership, attendance has held steady while the church school has grown. The demographics helped that church find the right person for their time and needs.

What do the demographic reports about Auburn tell us? Well, the full report set runs about 60 pages, so I can’t share everything, but here’s a few snapshots:

People in Auburn say:

God is love, and invites the world into a loving relationship.

Strong families are important.  
Same-sex marriage must remain legal and protected.  
Climate change is real.  
Ethnic diversity is important.  
Folks are concerned about social and political tensions.  
They continue to be worried about COVID.

Those concerns match so well with the basic beliefs of our family of churches. We believe that *whoever you are, wherever you are on life’s journey, you are welcome here*. We believe that love is the foundational principle of the Christian life. We take misconduct of our leaders seriously. Our denomination stands up for LGBTQ+ people, urges us to care about and respond to climate change. We want ethnic diversity to be more than just lip service. We share those concerns about tensions, and we are also concerned about staying safe from COVID.

The surveys go on to suggest important ways we can welcome new people: by being warm and friendly, by offering the very best worship experience we can, helping people feel welcome, make friends, enjoy events like holiday programs... in short, offering events that are intended to bring people together, to form community, and to work in ways which bring meaning and purpose to their lives.

All these ideas – and the many more contained in the full set of demographic studies – will give us some really helpful direction as we search for our next pastor, and plan the ways we will do ministry going forward in ways that reach out to the needs of our community of Auburn.

If you’d like to read some or all of the reports, send me an email, [interimpastor@auburnfirstucc.org](mailto:interimpastor@auburnfirstucc.org) and I’ll send them along to you. There will also be a full set available in the church office in the near future.

Blessings,  
Pastor Virginia



## Here We Grow Preschool

Welcome everyone to the third month of the school year. This year seems to be flying by. I cannot believe it is already November. Even though the weather is getting colder, spending time outside is still so important for all of us. Fresh air and sunshine are two of the best things we can do for our bodies and minds.

Thank you to everyone who took part in the Bemis Farm Scarecrow fundraiser; we hope you had a good time. We are once again doing a clothing drive with Savers. We will collect clothing, shoes, purses, belts, towels, blankets, etc. This year we are also taking books, movies, and CDs in boxes. The last day for dropping off will be November 16. Bags/boxes can be left in fellowship hall or in the hallway near the Sunday school rooms and we will put them away.

The children had a lot of fun on their Halloween parade. The older children went to trick or treat at the town hall; if you were in the area, we hope you got to see them.

We have decided to skip a Papa Gino's night in November; we will schedule one in December.

Here We Grow will be closed on Friday, November 10, in honor of Veterans Day. We want to say thank you to all who have served or are currently serving our country.

We will be closed Wednesday-Friday, November 22-24, for Thanksgiving break. We hope you are all able to enjoy some time with family and friends for the holiday.

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

### Happy Birthday wishes to:

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



### Happy Anniversary to

Skip and Paula Bigelow who will be celebrating their special day on November 29th.

## NEIGHBORS IN NEED

The Neighbors in Need offering, which we promote during the month of November, 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 our national Justice and Local Church Ministries office, you can find 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, healthcare, 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 Hockak 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. If you would like to make a donation, please make checks payable to the church, noting NIN in the memo section and return to the church in the enclosed offering envelope. Donations may be placed in the offering plate on Sunday mornings or mailed to the church at: 128 Central St., Auburn, MA 01501. Thank you.

**SAVE THESE DECEMBER DATES:**

12/3 Cookie Walk

12/17 Christmas Greenery Church Fundraiser

12/10 Cantata Sunday

12/24 10 a.m. **Church Service with Children's Christmas Pageant**

12/15 Parent's Night Out

12/16 Christmas Carol Singalong &amp; Potluck with Deacons' Basket Assembly

5 p.m. **Candlelight Communion Service****PLEASE NOTE ABOVE CHANGES TO CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES****FROM THE NOMINATING COMMITTEE**

**1 Peter 4:10-11** <sup>10</sup> Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms. <sup>11</sup> If anyone speaks, they should do so as one who speaks the very words of God. If anyone serves, they should do so with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen.

We can apply these words to all that we've received by God's common grace, including our time, talents and treasure. Peter encourages us that it is God who provides the gift, the grace and the goal of serving others. It is our hope, that in reading this scripture, it gives you the will to proudly serve your God and His church with your individual talents.

Please consider the following committee vacancies (# required to meet FCC bylaws):

**Board of Deacons:** 8 vacancies (*most critical*);**Board of Christian Education (BOCE):** 3 vacancies**Board of Christian Outreach:** 1 vacancy**Board of Trustees:** 3 vacancies**Memorial/Scholarship Committee:** 1 vacancy**Music Committee:** 3 vacancies**Nominating Committee:** 2 vacancies**Stewardship Committee:** 2 vacancies

If you have an interest in sharing your individual talents within our church, please reach out to Michele Schillinger (508.259.2239) or Sheila Skog (978.387.7705).



November is American Diabetes Month, COPD (chronic obstructive pulmonary disease) Awareness Month, Diabetic Eye Disease Month, Lung Cancer Awareness Month, and National Alzheimer's Disease Awareness Month.

COVID has not gone away! I still have test kits that expire November 18th. Please take them, give some to family members who have a cold or respiratory illness, so they can check to make sure they don't have COVID! I'm disposing of them after the 18th. I'm not sure if the Board of Health will be sending more kits, but I will keep you posted. Meanwhile, be safe and stay healthy! Remember, handwashing is the best preventative way to stay healthy and it doesn't take long to wash your hands.

Happy Thanksgiving! and God Bless —

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



### Herbert W. Mower, Sc.D

Please be in prayer for Fran Mower and family due to the recent passing of Herb Mower. Herb died of a massive heart attack on October 16, 2023. He was born in Somerville, MA, on May 6, 1943, to Hazel Nichol Mower and William A. Mower. He graduated from Somerville High School in 1961 and entered the Massachusetts Institute of Technology that fall, graduating in 1965.

Torn between a career in electrical engineering or medicine he studied medical physics, earning his doctorate from MIT in 1972, combining the two fields by becoming a Clinical Radiation Physicist working in the MIT-Lahey Clinic radiation therapy program during his graduate work. Following graduation, and three years with that program, he moved to Tufts-NEMCH, Southeast Hospital in Cape Girardeau, MO, and Danbury Hospital in Connecticut, returning to Lahey Clinic in 1990. He retired from Lahey as their Director of Radiation Therapy Physics in 2013. He was proud of having helped to plan and build therapy units at three hospitals. He was very active in his professional societies (AAPM and ACMP) and had participated in several international conferences for them. After retiring he worked with students who were entering the field and were junior members of the AAPM. He was awarded the Marvin M.D. Williams Professional Achievement Award by the AAPM in 2014.

In addition to all his professional work and involvement nationally, he found time to be an extremely active Mason who received his 33rd degree. He was a Past Master of his Blue Lodge, played the organ for some of his local lodges in three states, joined the Shriners while living in Missouri, and paraded with live camels in Shrine parades. He joined Scottish Rite in 1972 and became Thrice Potent Master of Boston Lafayette Lodge of Perfection in 2002. While living in Connecticut, he belonged to the Scottish Rite Valley of Waterbury, receiving the Meritorious Service Award for his work there. He belonged to York Rite in Boston and was a member of St. Bernard Commandry #12. He was an active DeMolay member as a youth, and continued to work with various DeMolay chapters as an adult, and helped start the regional DeMolay Leadership Training Conference in New England. He continued to work with the LTC until very recently.

In his youth, he was very involved with his local YMCA, and became a camp staff person for the Somerville Y Camp and later for the Lawrence Y (now Merrimack Valley Y) camps. He led two trip camps for the Y: one around the U.S. and the other to Europe. He was a Certified Aquatic Leader Examiner, and helped Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts earn merit badges in swimming. Later he served on the Merrimack Valley Y Camping Services Board and several other committees. He was a licensed boat pilot for the camps on Lake Winnepesaukee and worked with the campers to help them learn about piloting a boat and passing N.H. boating exams. With all his camping experience, he was asked to be on the Board of the local Girl Scout Council in CT and was proud to be a member of the Girl Scouts.

As an alumnus, he volunteered for the MIT Admission's Department. He also was a member of Sigma Chi Fraternity volunteering for the MIT chapter by serving on the Corporate Board in various capacities, and working with their capital campaigns to renovate the chapter house. He worked with the undergraduates as Risk Manager and an advisor. He was a liaison to the MIT interfraternity group.

While doing all these things, he was an active father to his two daughters and spent lots of time with his four grandchildren. He leaves his wife of 54 years, Fran Mower, daughters Cynthia Mower and her children Anja and Alistair Eskelinen, and Elizabeth Dodge (Mrs. Ray Dodge) and her children Rachel and Benjamin Dodge; and his sister-in-law Margo McConnell and her two children.

Visitation with Herb's family will take place from 9:30 to 10:30 AM on Saturday, November 11, 2023 at the Britton-Wallace Funeral Home, 91 Central St., Auburn, with a Masonic ritual to begin promptly at 10 AM. Herb's funeral service will be held here at the church beginning at 11 AM that morning.

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### Get Your "From our Pumpkin Patch" Cookbook Here!!

Need a gift idea for the holiday season? Have you considered the church's cookbook? Each cookbook contains over 200 recipes. At \$15 each, they will make a great Christmas or hostess gift. Also, remember, this is a church fundraiser with proceeds going to the church's general fund.

If you would like to purchase a cookbook, please contact Michele Schillinger at 508-259-2239 and leave a brief message, along with your name and phone number, and she'll be sure to call you back. You may also email her at [chel061759@gmail.com](mailto:chel061759@gmail.com). Please include "cookbook" in the subject line of your email.



### FROM THE OUTREACH COMMITTEE

We no longer have a connection with the Goddard School for our coat donations. Therefore, the Outreach Committee will be teaming up with El Buen Samaritano (translation: The Good Samaritan) this year for a coat AND food pantry drive. We will be accepting donations of new and GENTLY used coats of ALL sizes, infant to adult. There will be a bin in fellowship hall beginning **Sunday October 29<sup>th</sup>**. We will collect both food and coat donations **through Sunday November 12<sup>th</sup>**. We would like to get all donations to EBS in time for Thanksgiving. Yes, we will take hats, gloves and mittens too.

The following is a list of items requested by the Food Bank. PLEASE no expired food. We will also be accepting cash donations so that EBS can purchase turkeys. Thank you in advance for your help.

#### SUGGESTED DONATION LIST:

Canned soup	Vegetable oil	Instant oatmeal
Boxed macaroni & cheese	Flour	Pasta sauce
Canned stew	Bagged children's snacks (pre-packaged)	Gravy
Canned vegetables	Cocoa	Cranberry sauce
Canned or bagged beans	Chips	Mashed potatoes
Canned tuna	Corn Flour	ALL KINDS of Seasoning
Canned sardines	Any kind of pasta	Chicken bouillon
Vienna sausages	Peanut butter	Any type of protein
Boxed or bagged rice	Saltine & Ritz crackers	Reusable bags
Boxed milk (shelf-stable)	Pop-tarts	Baby Diapers
Sugar	Apple sauce	Baby wipes
Salt	Fruit cups	Toilet paper
Pepper	Boxed or bagged cereal	Feminine & personal hygiene supplies

Dear Church Family,

Thank you so much for all of the beautiful cards, the outpouring of love and the many prayers for our family.

We are comforted to know that my sister, Cindy, is in her forever home with the Lord. We are grateful to have each of you in our lives.

In Christ,

Pam and Marty Tentor  
and family

*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 23:6*

### MEMORIAL SUNDAY SERVICE 10 A.M. NOVEMBER 5<sup>TH</sup>

We have designated November 5th as Memorial Sunday this year. At this special worship service we remember church members that we have lost in the past year. Also during this service, congregants will have an opportunity to come forward and receive a flower and light a candle in memory of a loved one.

This service of remembrance has proven to be moving and very special to those who have lost loved ones. So please mark your calendars for November 5th, and plan to join us on Memorial Sunday.

## NEWS FROM THE PUMPKIN PATCH

Again, 2023 has not disappointed regarding our annual Pumpkin Patch coverage and sales. Every day, whether the patch timeslots were covered for one hour or four hours, we had volunteers and customers willing to show up (even in the rain). Today, Oct 30th, Pumpkin Patch sales reached a final amount of **\$30,096.67**. The Navajo Nation Indian Reservation, in Farmington, NM who grow, harvest and ship our pumpkins submitted their official 'Profit Sheet' rates showing a PP profit of 60% from sales (**\$18,058.00**) and our FCC profit of 40% from sales (**\$12,038.67**). First Congregational Church increases its blessings by adding generous donations of **\$584.00**. The 2023 Pumpkin Patch fundraiser finishes October by bringing our church a total income of **\$12,622.67**.

Since this annual fundraiser began in 2007, we only once before have reached \$30K (in 2022). Another fun fact is that since 2007, our pumpkin patch fundraisers have raised a cumulative amount of more than \$100K for our church! Our blessings each year have been bestowed upon this church by its many volunteers that have included Scouts, National Honor Society Students (NHS), plus supportive customers.

### This year's Pumpkin Patch coverage volunteers included:

- ◆ 9 families (or teams) covered 1 single patch day timeslot.
- ◆ 7 families (or teams) covered 2 patch day timeslots.
- ◆ 12 families (or teams) covered 3 or 4 patch day timeslots.
- ◆ Most notable were timeslots of 5 or 6 day coverage and those volunteers were: Connie & Ron Hanks, the Minor family, and Diane Moore's team.
- ◆ Exceptional gratitude goes to Cindy Dube and Sue and Stu Campbell for the most timeslots at the patch in all weather.

Please give a warm thanks to all our many volunteers that worked together unloading, selling and volunteering until our season closed. Thank you to Deb Minor (Team Leader), Sheila Skog and Linda Mahler for taking on the Pumpkin Patch challenge and running a very successful sales year. To Denise Jobin for keeping the lines of communication open and to the MacPhee's for helping set up, close up and keep our required daily recording on track. We especially want to thank Wayne Bloomquist (the Pallet Master) and Bob Murray for his forklift skills on day one as well as for the use of his trailer for unwanted pumpkins. God Bless and thank you, everyone!

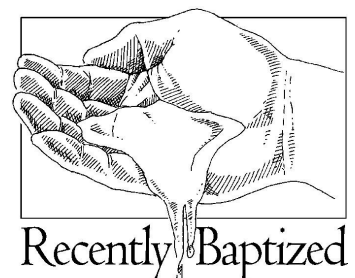
In closing, **NOW IS THE TIME** to find our next Pumpkin Patch Committee! The next Team Leader will determine if, and when, our 2024 delivery will be made; as well as, the pumpkin selections (i.e.; gizmos, perfect pumpkins, etc.). The 2024 Team Leader must have at least 2 other persons on the team for support and additional contact. In this we pray.

Sue MacPhee, Pumpkin Patch Recordkeeper

On Sunday, October 15th, we celebrated the baptism of Clara Jeanne Sparling. Clara is the 7-month-old daughter of Lisa and Jonathan Sparling.

On Sunday, October 29, we celebrated the baptism of Rylee Jeanne Waterman. Rylee is the 11½-month-old daughter of Ryan and Kaylee Waterman.

We pray God's continued blessing upon these precious little ones and their families.



## FROM OUR DIRECTOR OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

In the past few weeks, both our elementary class (led by Michele) and our confirmation class (led by Shannon, Michael and Lilly) are learning about prayer. Given the current state of humanity, I feel that is perfectly fitting!

*We need as many prayers from as many people as possible... Can I get an "Amen!"*

As it is with many lessons from the Bible, learning about prayer from an academic perspective, can be lengthy and complicated. However, when you learn about prayer from a practical perspective... it is quite simple and straight forward!

The Lord's Prayer was taught by Jesus to His disciples. They asked Jesus how to pray. Jesus gave them the outline, which is the Prayer of the Lord or the Prayer of the Father (it has a few names). What we are essentially looking at within this outline is what has been referred to as the 4 elements of prayer. These elements differ slightly depending on the sect of Christianity and the author but remain basically similar. Give praise and honor to God, ask God to forgive your sins, be grateful for the gifts He has already provided, present your request to God and, lastly, understand God's will (you may not get what you ask for according to your own need and timeline).

Practically speaking, prayer is talking and communicating to God. God wants to hear from us. If you are having a good day, "Thanks, God." If you are having a bad day, "Why, God?" If you are in a troubling situation, "Please help me, God!" If you have done or said something hurtful, "I am sorry, God." You can be standing tall, sitting slumped, on your knees, eyes closed, yelling, whispering, crying or singing. God wants to hear from you! We learn from John 14:16 that we all may be filled with the Holy Spirit. Jesus tells us quite specifically that while He may be ascending to Heaven, the Spirit of Truth will always be with us! God knows what is in our hearts. He knows our needs and our intentions. So know this, that even when you cannot find the "right" words to say to the Lord, reflect on what is in your heart. He's got you!

Quickly, I want to share with you something I never realized before I did research for these lessons. The Lord's Prayer uses all plural pronouns. Take a look... think about that!!! Every time we recite the Lord's Prayer, we are praying not for ourselves, but for all of God's children!

Our Sunday School classrooms are growing!! The Board of Christian Education and I are seeking a teacher to help us. Please reach out to any of us if you are interested in joining our team. We have a wonderful group of children that are eager to learn about Jesus.

Keep an eye open, we are bringing back butter braids this year!!!! The YOM will also be trying some new fundraisers this year. If you, or someone you know, has a local business and would like to offer a fundraising idea, please let me know!

Thank you for all the love and support you give to me, the BOCE and our Sunday School/Confirmation teachers.

God Bless,  
~Shannon Hartmann

**THANK YOU** to everyone who participated in Consecration Sunday or returned a pledge card. If you have not yet returned your pledge card, please do so (whether you're making a pledge or not) so that we can plan the budget for 2024. Knowing who has responded also helps us reduce follow-up letters. The Deacons or the church office can help you if you don't have a pledge card. No pledge is too small, and if your situation changes, your pledge can be changed at any time.

### ATTENTION ALL COMMITTEES & BOARDS

The Trustees will be preparing the 2024 budget soon. Please submit your 2024 budget requests by their next meeting scheduled for November 16<sup>th</sup>. Thank you.

## 2023 Christmas Poinsettia Order

Once again we are offering the opportunity to purchase poinsettias. In the past we've decorated the sanctuary with these beautiful plants. At the close of the Christmas Eve service, members may claim their plants and continue to enjoy them at home, or give them as gifts. You may dedicate your poinsettias in memory of a loved one, or in celebration of a special occasion, etc. Please complete the form below and include payment (cash or a check to the church noting poinsettia in the memo section) with your order.

**Please use a separate order form for each plant.**

**Poinsettia Given By: PLEASE PRINT** 

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Include above name(s) in dedication? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

In Memory of \_\_\_\_\_

or \_\_\_\_\_

In Celebration of \_\_\_\_\_

**Color:** red \_\_\_\_\_ white \_\_\_\_\_ pink \_\_\_\_\_

**Size: Single Plant Pot** \$ 9.00 \_\_\_\_\_

**Double Plant Pot** \$18.00 \_\_\_\_\_

**Three Plant Pot** \$25.00 \_\_\_\_\_

**Four Plant Pot** \$32.00 \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Please check here if you will **NOT** be taking your poinsettia home.

If you have any questions, call Michele Schillinger, cell # 508-259-2239.

**ORDERS DUE BY DEC. 3<sup>RD</sup>**

TIDINGS is a monthly publication of

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doing Christ's work in the world.*

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### November 2023

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OR CURRENT RESIDENT