

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,

From the Director of Religious Education

A Fabulous Fall to you all! I hope everyone is well rested from the summer and ready to dig in to learning. RALLY DAY is SEPTEMBER 13! All children will be down in the vestry for a festival of singing, crafts, stories, and an ice cream party. Parents, we will need you to check your child/children's information if you are a returning parent and to fill out a registration form if you are a newcomer.

We are very excited about this upcoming year and the Board of Education and I have been working throughout the summer to work on some staffing issues. We have come up with a program we think will work. We are asking that people sign up for a ONE month teaching commitment as a part of our block scheduled teaching. You may sign up for additional months if desired. So, if you are a faithful churchgoer, it would only be 4 of your Sundays out of 52 and, if you choose early, it may be less, depending on the month you choose. Please see me or another Board of Ed. member before all the good months are gone. FYI, just because you are in the choir you can still participate; I'm sure Heather will give you pardon for 4 weeks. Another option we are developing is for "guest speakers" to come down the last Sunday of the month and share a faith story with the kids. It may be how you became a Christian, a wonderful event in your life that showed you God's goodness or presence or just what it means to you to be a member of this church.

I will be holding Family events that are open to ALL members of the church. Start saving those flannel shirts and overalls for the 2nd Annual Scarecrow building event. I am also looking into the Youth Group and what events will be happening for them. Information will be coming soon.

Thank you all for you anticipated assistance in this worthwhile endeavor. Today's children will be tomorrow's committee members and teachers with the right guidance and knowledge.

Have a blessed month and see you in church!

Jean McPherson
Director of Religious Education

September Birthdays include:

Ted Beauvais - September 6th Jacob McPherson - September 14th Laura DuHamel - September 19th Happy Birthday!



On September 14th Lori & Nick Stockhaus will be celebrating their 18th wedding anniversary - Congratulations!

Sanctuary Loan Update

As of August 1st, the outstanding balance on the Sanctuary Loan stands at \$9,593. Thank you very much for keeping your Sanctuary pledges current. If you want to know how much remains on your pledge, please contact Lori Stockhaus.

Our next church supper is planned for Saturday, September 19th, at 5:00 p.m.

Menu: Ham, hot dogs & beans

Adults \$10 Children \$5

Hope to see you there!

Chef: Bob Murray Servers: BOCE We celebrated with Jane McCallum and Brian Lapierre as their daughter, Adele Jane Lapierre, was baptized at our church on Sunday, May 31, 2009. Adele was just 3 months old at that time.



On June 21st we celebrated in the baptism of Mason Jay Brothers. Mason is 7 month old and is the son of Craig Brothers and Heidi Johnson, and grandson to Bob Johnson.

We celebrated the baptism of Kendall Helen Johnson on June 28, 2009. Kendall was only 8 weeks old when she was baptized. She's the daughter of Scott and Nicole Johnson and the granddaughter of Will and Nan Johnson. Her great-granddad is Warren Prescott.

More recently, on August 23rd, we celebrated the baptism of Hendrix David Hartmann. Hendrix is 5 months old. His parents are Shannon and Craig Hartmann, and he's the grandson of Michele and Mike Schillinger.

May God richly bless these precious children and their families!



Thank you to all for attending and supporting our chicken barbeque and yard sale in June. You helped make it a fun and successful day!

Cindy Dube

SCHOLARSHIPS AWARDED

The First Congregational Church awarded scholarships to the following recipients:

Kelsea Hanks, Adam Pranaitis, and Allison Racicot.

We wish you much success as you continue your education.



What Is All the Fuss About?

Reflections from your Interim Pastor, Rev. Mark Seifried

Do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, or about your body, what you will wear.

Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing?

Look at the birds of the air; they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them...

Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow...

but if God so clothes the grass of the field...will he not much more clothe you?

(excerpts from Matthew 6:25-30)

The summer is waning. Normally, as autumn approaches, we see lawns beginning to turn brown everywhere. Not so this year because of the record rainfalls we've received since June...that is except for some. I've noticed, even in the midst of this wet summer, that some people still have brown lawns. The brown lawns belong to people who dump too many chemicals on their property and cut the grass too short and too often. Meanwhile, those with more carefree lawn stewardship have green and lush lawns.

I think the biblical citation above is appropriate to this conundrum. Those who fuss with their lawns too much actually negate some of God's care. Most lawn grasses are genetically programmed to grow lush without much fuss from people (their fertilizers and mowing). I have a neighbor with a beautiful lawn and he's only mowed twice all season. His lawn thrives with his more hands -off approach during years of drought and years like this where a rain shower seems to be almost part of daily life. Contrast his lawn with another neighbor's twice - a-week-mowing and once a month weed-and-feed lawn. His is brown unless he douses it with even more water than God has supplied...and then he needs more chemicals to kill the fungus and mildew that grow.

I wonder if our souls aren't made that way, too. Someone once said that the only thing worse than an unexamined life is one that is examined too deeply. I'd bet we all know people who fuss over their children so much that the children become little neurotic self-centered beasts. When they grow up the parents don't understand how their parenting unraveled and what caused their offspring not to know how to make their own decisions or at least not be able to make good decisions. "Too much fuss!" would be my answer.

(Note: I am not advocating neglect or letting children make all their own decisions, but rather finding a more healthy balance so that kids can be children before they're expected to be adults. Likewise, some adults need to pay more attention to their inner life, and reign in their spiritual sloth so that they can have a more mature faith.)

Jesus had a lot to say about people who made too much fuss about following the letter of the law and those who were so rigorous in following social protocol. He told us that those people choked the Spirit out of life because they were so busy making sure everything was perfect.

We are all made in the image of God. Some of our idiosyncrasies, blemishes, and uniqueness are what God intended. Trying to undo God's work is futile in most cases and will drive us mad...or at least cause us to spawn a lot more neurotic self-centered beasts.

We are in the midst of the season of Pentecost, which is also called "Ordinary Time." As we bask in the remaining days of this verdant summer, I pray that you will take time to appreciate the ordinary blessings around you, the ordinary people and their ordinary mannerisms - all made to appreciate as blessings from God. All the while, praise God, the One who has adorned all of life with so much beauty that we can't take it all in, nor can we fathom the copious care God has imparted to every fiber of our being - inside and out! Let's take time to notice just how much God has fussed, so that we don't have to fuss as much as we might otherwise.



I hope everyone had a nice summer. A big concern for people now is the H1N1 flu, (Swine flu) and the other strains of the flu that are coming. The biggest and most important way to prevent any illness is HAND WASHING!!!!!! I will have weekly updates on the Health table in Fellowship Hall. We have been offered to have some nurses come to Fellowship Hall after church on a Sunday to administer the flu vaccines. Please let me know if you are interested. They ask for a minimum of 30 people. They

accept most insurances, except Fallon. They will take money: \$30.00 for one vaccine and \$45.00 for the pneumonia and flu vaccines.

September is Childhood Cancer Month, Fruits and Veggies-More Matters Month, Healthy Aging Month, Leukemia and Lymphoma Awareness Month, National Alcohol and Drug Addiction Recovery Month, National Cholesterol Education Month, National Pain Awareness Month, and Whole Grain Month. September 15th is GET READY DAY. It is a day to remind us to be prepared for a disaster. Get a food and water supply. Get flashlights and other things you might need. Look for the list on the table.

Recently, the equipment from the closet (walkers, tub seats, etc.) have been circulating. I am glad to have this happen. It seemed for awhile that nothing was moving. It's nice that people are taking advantage of this equipment.

God Bless! Deborah Pranaitis, Parish Nurse We recently received the following note of thanks from a couple who borrowed a wheelchair from our medical supply closet.



Thank you!

It was put to good use.

God bless,

John and Michelle

Please keep the following families in your prayers:

Robert F. Pierce

Robert F. Pierce, 66, of Auburn passed away Monday, August 3, 2009 in his home after a long illness. He is survived by his wife of 41 years, Donna M. (Dunlap) Pierce; his two daughters, Karen Facteau and her husband, Robert, and Janice Joy and her husband, Stephen; his son, Kurt Pierce, and his wife, Kristen, and 6 grandchildren. Robert retired in 2005 from Norton Company/Saint Gobain Company in Worcester, where he worked for 38 years. His funeral was held on Thursday, August 6th at Britton Wallace Funeral Home in Auburn followed by burial at Hillside Cemetery in Auburn.

Richard Berg

Richard F. Berg, 75, of Millbury, died Friday, August 21st in St. Vincent Hospital, Worcester, after an illness. He leaves his daughter, Laurie L. Wyse and her husband, Brian; his two sisters, Mary Jane Gustafson and Barbara Berg; his 3 grandchildren and a great grandson, and his dear friend, Bernadine Robinson. Richard retired from the Auburn Water District in 1999, where he had worked for more than 20 years.

Britton Wallace Funeral Home is handling the arrangements. Burial will be private.

"I am the resurrection and the Life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies." John 11:25



September Tidings from *Here We Grow* Preschool

On September 2, 2009, *Here We Grow* Preschool will be opening the school for its 21st year. WOW! At this time, all four year old classes are full with wait lists and morning 3 year old classes are filled. We do have a few openings in the afternoon three year old class. As the year begins, I feel confident that we will get a few more children to fill those spots. If you know of anyone with a 3 year old who is looking for a preschool, please have them give us a call.

As you may know, three of our teachers left at the end of the year, but we have already hired teachers to replace them. In room 1 is Susan Masters, Cristi Corey, or Pam DiLeo; room 2 is Gina Murphy, Jean Marhefka, or Marianne Lavallee; room 3 is Debra Nelson, Sherri Leonard, or Anne Coyne, and room #4 is Helen Ethier. I'd like to thank Wayne Prouty and Stan MacPhee for the jobs they have set up or done over the summer. A big thank you to Craig Premo for the awesome job of painting and removing a bubbler that hasn't worked in the 20 years I have been here. The hallways are spiffy shiny.

The end of the '08-'09 school year was difficult for many of the staff and some of our families. As a staff, we will miss our co-teachers who have gone onto other jobs or retired altogether. Some families have been with us for 6 or 7 years, and now we have seen their babies graduate. We wish them all well, and ask them to keep sending their friends our way. Many, if not all, feel that **Here We Grow** Preschool is the best program around. They are our best form of advertisement.

All end-of-year field trips went well as did all 4 graduations. The young fours had a day graduation with a make your own sundae party. The 3 year olds had a short but sweet day graduation and then were entertained by Fran the Magician (he was great). The 4's going on to kindergarten in the fall had 2 night graduations. They were spectacular. So we made it through another successful year.

Until the fall, have a great summer.

Dawn Murphy **Here We Grow** Director



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 the third in a series of excerpts from these writings.

George DuHamel and Paula Lubin, Church Historians

Worcester Sa. To William Parker Collector. Greetings.

In the name of the government 7 people of the State of Massachusetts Bay you are fourthwith Required to Notify & warn the free holders & other Inhabitance of the parish made out of Worcester & Towns ajasent to meet at the meeting house in 3'd parish on munday the twelfth Day of January Currant at ten of the clock in the forenoon to act on the following articals.

11y to chuse a moderator for S'd meting.

2ly To see if the Parish will chuse a commetty to attend on a commetty from the great and General Corte & act aney thing Reletive their to as they shall think proper.

316 To see if the Parish will do aney thing for mr. Oliver Curtice requesting a pew upon the logr floor for him & act theron as they shall think proper.

4ly to see if the parish will by some suitable method call upon Mr. Timothy Parker for his reason why the completing the Inside work of the meeting house agreeable to his contract with the parish hath been hither to Delayed & prefer Such methods with him as they think expedient that S'd work may be duly completed or act any mater Relative to the matter which may at this time seem befitting.

5ly to see if the Parish will add one more to the commetty for seeking the Incorporation of this Parish into a Town. Here of fail not and make a Return to one or more of us at or before the time appointed for holding S'd meeting. Given under our hands and Seal this fift Pay of January AP 1778.

Jon's Stone Charles Richardson

Samuel Eddy Commetty

Return Worcester Parish January 12th, 1778

Pursuant to the within warrant I have notified the votable Inhabitance of 3'd Parish rto meet at the time & place for the purpose within mentioned by posting a copy of the same in the costemary manner.

Collector

William Parker



September 26, 2009: 9:00 am - 5:00 pm

Several sites: 1) Private Home, Worcester, MA;

2) Cottage Hill Academy, Baldwinville, MA;

3) Community Harvest Project, N. Grafton, MA

Additional sites may be added as needed (visit www.wamsucc.org for updated information on sites)

Private Home in Worcester

Scraping and painting for a Worcester homeowner unable to maintain her own home.

Cottage Hill Academy:

Cottage Hill Academy is a staff secure residential program designed to serve adolescent girls ages twelve through twenty. Cottage Hill Academy serves girls referred from the Massachusetts Department of Social Services, Department of Youth Services, Department of Education, and Department of Mental Health. http://www.youinc.org/Programs/Residential/CottageHill/CottageHill.htm

Community Harvest Project:

Community Harvest Project is a nonprofit, volunteer farming organization based at the Brigham Hill Community Farm in North Grafton, MA. All the vegetables they grow are donated to hunger relief organizations in central Massachusetts. www.community-harvest.org

Our mission is... To assist non-profit human service agencies in maintenance and clean up their property and to assist homeowners who are unable to care for their homes.

What to expect... There will be a large number of adult, high school, and middle school participants. There will be jobs for skilled and unskilled workers. We will work hard and have a good time.

Volunteers: For WAYS to work smoothly, we need a good balance of people and skills:

Experienced construction people (professional and non-professional)

Adults and teens familiar with this kind of work

Adults and teens who are willing to be instructed in simple tasks

Tools: Participants will be asked to bring tools and reusable materials based on the site to which they are

assigned.

Food: Lunch, snacks and drinks will be provided.

Cost: \$10.00 per person

Sponsorships: Each high schooler and adult is asked to raise a *minimum of \$20.00* from family, friends or

members of their local congregation. Materials are expensive, so the more sponsorship we

receive, the better we can assist our agencies and homeowners .

We would like each <u>Middle School youth group</u> to *consider* a financial contribution to help defray the cost of materials needed for the work at our sites. Please plan a contribution that is manageable for

your group.

Do you know of a person or a place that needs help? Let us know and perhaps we can assist in your project. **Are you looking for mission projects for adults or youth?** We may know of places where you can help change lives.

For Information please contact: Jen Bohn at 508-832-0428 or PetuniaBohn@msn.com.



INSPIRING GENEROSITY

A message from the Stewardship Committee

"You reap what you sow." How often have we heard this quoted? Though we often view this in a physical way – as in the work of the farmer - its deeper (spiritual) meaning is of a different nature. In scripture, Paul says "God will not be mocked - you reap what you sow." It's interesting that Paul brings the image of "God" into this picture. Jesus tells us about an image, a physical mystery, when a small seed - the mustard seed - is planted, watered and cultivated. It is transformed into a large tree.

How does one grow "generosity" or "love?" What seeds need to be planted and how much watering and cultivation is needed? How does one grow a church?? These are tough and interesting questions that evoke opinions from almost everyone. The church is comprised of many independent people with different ideas and varying degrees of biblical knowledge. The majority want to feel a part of something larger than themselves, larger than their immediate family. The church brings people together like brothers and sisters in a large extended family built on love and compassion. This church, this faith community, this living Jesus consciousness is a compass that helps give our lives direction and comfort both in good and difficult times as we travel the road of life.

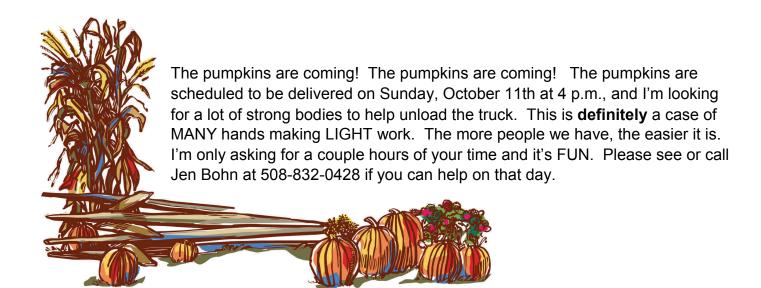
The church has been good to the Auburn community, lovingly feeding and watering our souls. It truly needs to be here for future hungry and thirsty souls. "The one who sows sparingly will reap sparingly, the one who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully" (2 Corinthians 9:6).

Therefore in the upcoming pledge drive; please give generously!

BRAINSTORMING SESSION

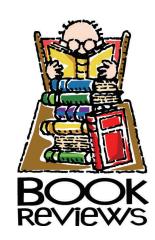
Please remain after church on Sunday, September 6 for a VERY casual meeting to discuss ideas on how to "capitalize" on the success of the "Pumpkin Patch." Bob Murray would like to do a chicken barbeque and we're looking for other ideas along the lines of a "Fall Festival" - possibly with face painting, a petting zoo, etc. - we're open to any and all suggestions.

We need the involvement of the WHOLE congregation, so please plan to join us.



Library Tidings by Gloria Whitehead

Almost a year ago Pastor Mark was chosen to set us in motion and to guide us in our search for a "new" pastor to follow the retirement of our devoted Pastor, Kenneth E. Knox. A few weeks later, Pastor Mark ordered six books whose varied contents should be helpful in making decisions. The books were mentioned in the *Tidings* earlier and continue to be on display on the table in the adult library. The following listing of each book's title, author and a brief description may be helpful; though scanning a few pages was the best way to determine what the contents were all about - not as overpowering as it would appear.



Becoming a Blessed Church by N. Graham Standish - Forming a Church of Spiritual Purpose, Presence and Power - presents a vision for churches that can be blessed and offers simple blessings through simple acts of faith and trust

The Practicing Congregation - Imagining a New Old Church by Diana Butler Bass is able to identify emerging forms of congregational life that display an unexpected vitality, adaptability and faithfulness. It's a buoyant book.

Selecting Church Leaders - A Practice in Spiritual Discernment by Charles M. Olsen and Ellen Morseth - this book offers the often needed corrective to nominating/search committee work by recognizing God's work at the center of the process and providing steps to connect intentionally the Holy Spirit to leadership selection.

The other three books are:

- #1 Growing Together Spiritual Exercises for Church Committees by Rochelle Melander and Harold Eppley
- #2 Discerning God's Will Together a Spiritual Practice for the Church by Danny E. Morris & Charles W. Olsen
- and #3 Tribal Church Ministering to the Missing Generation by Carol Howard Merritt.

On the lighter side is *Whispers Through the Trees* by Susan Plunkett and Krysteen Seelen. If you're a bird lover as well as entertained by mysteries, this novel, centered in Sparrow Island's serene beauty, is bound to appeal to you. It, along with volumes of other books, is a welcome gift from Gloria Beauregard (Susan Klaucke's mother).

The First Congregational Church's Outreach Committee, would like to invite you to participate in their Heifer International fundraiser.

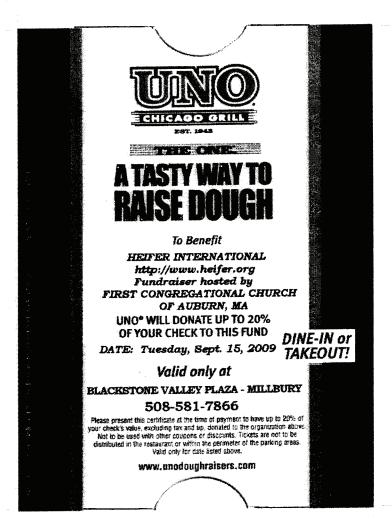
On Tuesday, September 15, 2009, please stop by and place an order at UNO's Millbury Blackstone Valley Plaza (only). By presenting one of these coupons below, UNO's will donate up to 20% of your check from the 'Dine -In' or 'Take-Out' order. Your coupon is necessary for credit and more coupons are available in Fellowship Hall.

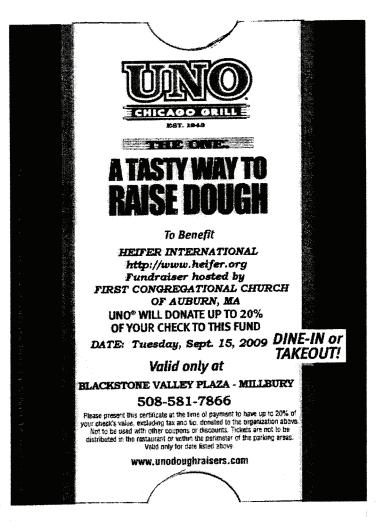
So spread the word and make additional copies for your family and friends. Note: these coupons are not to be distributed in the restaurant or within the perimeter of the parking areas.

Valid only at Millbury's UNO Chicago Grill, Tues. Sept. 15th (all day). Thank you!

Heifer's mission is to work with communities to end hunger and poverty and care for the Earth. Since it began in 1944, Heifer has helped 9.2 million families move toward a greater self reliance through livestock, training and "passing on the gift."

Please take a moment to visit the Heifer website: http://www.heifer.org







From the Choir Room

Welcome back choirs! The first choir rehearsal will be on Thursday, September 10th at 6 p.m. in the Choir Room. (Note the time change.) September 10th is also World Prayer Day. If you wish to unite with others in prayer, the Unity Prayer this day is "Reach in, reach out. We can change the world." First Church Choir will begin singing in church on September 13th. Joyful Noyse will begin rehearsals on September 13th at 11:15 a.m.

We'd like to welcome two new choir members this year - Gordon and Betty Goodwin. It's good to have you! Also, anyone who has an interest in singing or music is invited to join the choir - experience not necessary.

Any child age 5 and up is welcome to join Joyful Noyse. This year we will be adding two more clip on microphones, bringing the total to four. This will enable us to do more movement, and allows us to hear the youth clearly.

I look forward to another year of making wonderful music for our Lord.

Blessings,

Heather Moore, Minister of Music

WORCESTER COMMUNITY HOUSING RESOURCES, INC. HOME IMPROVEMENT LOAN PROGRAM

As you are likely aware, many homes within the city of Worcester and Worcester County are in need of major repairs, ranging from leaking roofs, damaged siding and broken windows to the repair of health and safety building code violations. With the challenges of the decline in home values and credit blemishes, many homeowners are unable to secure loans through traditional sources. Our loan program features a streamlined application process, nominal closing costs, and does not require a property appraisal. We also provide work specification writing and construction monitoring services as part of every loan.

Eligible borrowers can apply for up to \$15,000 in loan assistance at 6.25% for a term of up to 7 years. Additional program details can be found on the flyer posted in Fellowship Hall or at www.wchr.org.

This loan program is administered by Worcester Community Housing Resources (WCHR) and is made possible through our partnership with the NeighborWorks® HomeOwnership Center of Worcester. WCHR is a Worcester based non-profit organization whose mission is to help create and preserve affordable housing and to initiate and support neighborhood revitalization in the greater Worcester area. Please contact Brian Colbert at 508-799-0322 ext. 107 or at bcolbert@hocw.net to set up an appointment or for more information.



OUTREACH NEWS

The Outreach committee is having a fundraiser at Pizzeria Uno at the mall in Millbury on Tuesday, September 15th. The money is going to help purchase the Ark for Heifer International. Please see page 10 of this newsletter

for coupons. Additional coupons are available on the table in Fellowship Hall. Please enjoy a nice meal out and at the same time help to "Build The ARK."

Also, a big thanks to those buying the grocery cards which benefit the Hope for Housing program. Since Mother's Day, May 10th, we've contributed about \$340 to help prevent more house foreclosures in Worcester County, without really trying.

I hope more people will buy the cards; it's a great way to help.

Debbie Pranaitis Chair

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
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Auburn, Mass

September 2009						
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