



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

“A rose by any other name.” The quote is from Juliet during the famous balcony scene. This is a 12-14 year old girl talking, trying to convince herself to go after a guy she knows her whole family hates. I am saying this is not level headed wisdom.

Have you ever thought about the name of things? Would a rose smell as sweet if it was called “burlap?” Would there be burlap gardens and burlap societies? Or would violets or peonies take first place in the flower game?

I disagree with Juliet, as I think Shakespeare wants us to. Names are very important. A good or bad name will make a big first impression and few people or things overcome a first impression.

As I write this, I am coughing and my nose is running. Do I have a cold? I think not. The morning weather girl says that the spring pollen is rising. So rather than a cold, it could be my allergies. Allergies are just annoying. Update: then I saw the doctor and the test came back FLU. I did not feel too bad when it was allergies, but now that it is the flu, I am in much more pain.

What difference does it make whether it is a cold, the flu or allergies? The name changes what we expect and how we feel. Even though how you treat a cold or allergies is about the same.

BUT, a cold lasts a couple weeks and you need to avoid people. An allergy just means you sneeze, cough and blow your nose, but soon the pollen will stop and you will feel better. Somehow allergies are easier to take than a cold.

We want to name things. In Genesis, Adam is given dominion over all the creatures of the earth and sea, part of that dominion is in naming them. Would a squirrel be so lovable if it was called “a bushy tailed rat?” I think not.

We give God many names and titles. No one name can hold the full meaning of God. Though people try. We call on God with different names in different times. Jesus calls Abba, Papa, when he is in the garden about to begin the passion.

It was thought that Jehovah or Yahweh was a powerful magical name. It was used in magical spells and in healing charms. There was thought to be secret names for God that were even more powerful.

In Islam it is thought that God has at least 99 names. I like that idea. God is too big and we are too different for one view of God to work for everyone.

May God in His many names watch over all of us and hear us when we pray.

Pastor Brian

5/6 “Servants and Friends”
(How God Chooses)

5/13 “Honor Thy Mother”



5/20 “The Spirit”

5/27 “The Trinity”



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

QUOTE OF THE MONTH

"God knows what is best for us, so sometimes His answer is 'no,' sometimes His answer is 'not yet,' and sometimes His answer is 'not in the way you expect.' But He will always answer your prayer in the way that is best for your life." ~ J. Meyer

Church World Service

The CWS Blankets Program provides funds to help people in need around the world, including the U.S. Donations provide the means to transform lives and communities when they are faced with an emergency. For over 60 years, Church World Service has worked in partnership with local communities providing blankets and other emergency supplies in the wake of a disaster. The CWS Kit and Blanket Programs are two of the many ways CWS shares in a hope-filled tomorrow. Your support truly makes a difference in the lives of children and families the world over. (The cost of one blanket is \$10.) In 2017 the total number of kits and blankets distributed globally was 243,952. Within the United States (including U.S. Territory Puerto Rico) 4,320 blankets were distributed, 113 baby kits, 5,330 school kits, 123,039 hygiene kits and 4,612 clean-up buckets.

Church World Service . . . It's about blankets and so much more!

Offering envelopes may be found in the church pews throughout the month of May. Please make checks out to First Congregational Church noting "Blankets" in the memo section and place in the offering plate on Sunday, or mail a check directly to the church: 128 Central Street, Auburn, MA 01501. Thank you!



May is Arthritis Awareness Month, Better Hearing and Speech Month, Food Allergy Action Month and Healthy Vision Month. It is also Melanoma/Skin Cancer Detection and Prevention Month, Mental Health Month, National Asthma and Allergen Awareness Month, National Osteoporosis Month, National Fitness and Sports Month. We can't forget National Stroke Awareness Month and Ultraviolet Awareness Month.

Now that the sun has come out, we need to be aware and use sunscreen and wear sunglasses, especially when we are out at sporting events with the children, who also need the correct protective equipment for their sport. If you notice a mole that is bigger than the eraser on the end of a pencil, get it checked! You can always ask for a skin check with your doctor.

Please remember the health table in Fellowship Hall and the closet just inside the door to the educational wing. These items change. I went to one health fair and I have 2 more coming up. I take samples and put them on the table. I also have information about services available in the area.

Enjoy the sun and the warm weather, but be safe.

God Bless!
Debbie Pranaitis, Parish Nurse
Cell: 508-612-4521

Coffee Hour Hosts

5/6	Board of Ed (BOCE)
5/13	Stewardship Committee
5/20	Financial Secretaries/Treasurers
5/27	Board of Deacons
6/3	Board of Ed (BOCE)

SPECIAL MAY COMMUNITY SUPPER

Our next Community Supper will be held on Saturday, May 19th, at 5 p.m. Thank you to the Stewardship Committee for agreeing to serve at this supper. This is not a church fundraiser, but a special outreach supper (by ticket only). Many church volunteers will be needed to ensure its success. So, please mark your calendars and look for more info to come in future bulletins or call the church office, 508-832-2845. **Thank you!**



**MARK YOUR CALENDARS FOR
CHILDREN'S SUNDAY ON JUNE 3RD.
LOOK FOR THE ANNUAL PICNIC SIGN-UP SHEET
IN FELLOWSHIP HALL AS THE DATE APPROACHES.**

TRI-CONFERENCE ANNUAL MEETING ~ June 15 & 16, 2018

The second Tri-Conference Annual Meeting is to be held June 15 & 16 at the Mass Mutual Center in Springfield, MA.

Last year's historic first-ever joint meeting of our three conferences got the ball rolling when each conference voted in favor of pursuing the idea of joining together. Conference leaders have been working on the details ever since, and now it's time to get down to the nitty gritty.

At this meeting, delegates of the Massachusetts, Connecticut and Rhode Island conferences will be asked to officially create a new, unified conference by approving a set of new bylaws, establishing a unified Board of Directors, electing officers, and making minor changes to their existing bylaws. They will also conduct the business of the individual conferences.

The meeting will feature dynamic worship and a keynote address by the Rev. Traci Blackmon, the Executive Minister of Justice and Witness Ministries of the United Church of Christ, and Senior Pastor of Christ the King UCC in Florissant, Missouri.

These are indeed times filled with hope as we – the Connecticut, Massachusetts, and Rhode Island Conferences – consider voting to form a new, united conference with the hope of making our region a more just, loving, and compassionate place.

Our united covenant: ***Living the Love and Justice of Jesus.***

We declare these values essential to our shared ministry together:

We understand the local church exists to make disciples of Jesus

We strive and commit to making God's love and justice real

We believe God is calling us to bring new life as agents of change

We encourage the solidifying of current covenantal partnerships and the creation of new ones

Go to www.macucc.org for more info.

FROM THE DIRECTOR OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Spring has finally arrived and the flowers are blooming. Thank God for the renewal of our spirits and our senses at this wonderful and warm time of the year.

Sunday school started its last quarter and we are nearing the end of another year. I am so impressed at how far all the kids have come. I truly believe that having continuity with the classes helps with the bonding and easy flow each week.

JUNE 3 IS CHILDREN'S SUNDAY. The kids are all preparing to participate in some way with the service. We again will have our **annual cookout** on the church lawn following the service. Please plan to attend this fun event and congratulate our kids for a great year. We will have a signup sheet in fellowship hall later in the month.

Confirmation Class for the 2018-2019 school year will have a meeting on June 10th to give you all the details of the upcoming class starting in September. Anyone entering 8th grade or higher is invited to attend with a parent. Any questions, please speak with Pastor Brian.

If you are interested in teaching or helping out in Sunday school for the remainder of this year or next year, please see Katie Sharr or me.

If God called us to a task He will then qualify us for the job. J. Hyles

Jean McPherson, Director of Religious Education



Choir Appreciation

We listen to them every Sunday in church, at least the chancel choir. We are again blessed to have an active bell choir in our church. Have you ever stopped to consider how much would be missing from our services without the input from these two groups? It would be like eating an ice cream cone with no ice cream in it. UGH!

As the choirs prepare for their much needed rest, yes – each choir rehearses one afternoon or evening each week, it is a good time to thank them. In appreciation for their work, the Music Committee and an anonymous donor are helping to underwrite a meal for each choir at Jasmine's. This gives the choirs a time to interact without having to stare at their music, repeat the past piece or certain measures therein and just enjoy.

Our chancel choir this year under the direction of Heather Moore: Barbara Allaire, Ron Hanks, Debbie Mahlert, Linda Mahlert, Paula Bigelow, Ted Steinhilber, Lori-Ann Stockhaus and Pam Tentor.

Our handbell choir under the direction of Herb Mower: Sue Campbell, Beverly Geddes, Pastor Brian Grover, Nan Johnson, Ellie Lowell, Fran Mower and Martha Pappas.

When you run into these folks, be sure to share your appreciation for their efforts in adding to the beauty of our services.

Herb Mower
Music Committee Chair



Bell Choir Recognition Sunday is May 13th.
(Chancel) Choir Recognition Sunday is May 20th.



From **Here We Grow** Preschool

May already? Where did this year go? We are busy preparing for the end of our school year, field trips, spree day and graduations; there is so much to do. Let's hope this nice weather stays with us for a while.

We were fortunate to have had members of the Massachusetts State Police Amber Alert team, along with Auburn and Worcester Police Departments, visit us recently to do fingerprinting of all graduating four-year-olds. Thank you to all community groups for their continued support.

We will be having our end of year field trips in May. Three-year-olds are going to Whittier Farm and the four-year-olds are going to Capen Hill Nature Sanctuary; we are excited to be trying these two new locations.

Spree Day and graduations will be held during the day, the first full week of June. With our Summer Camp happening the weeks of June 18 and 25.

We still have openings for both three and four-year-olds for next year as well as summer camp; spread the word.

Until next month,
Cristi Corey
Director

Here We Grow Preschool

SAVE THE DATE - The **PUMPKIN PATCH FAIR** will be held on Saturday, **October 20th**.

As in past years, we will need many volunteers to make this a success, so please mark your calendars!

Contact Cindy Ryan with any questions, ideas or offers to help, 508-832-3416.

New this year: the fair will be opened up to crafters. If you know any crafters who may be interested in renting a space at our fair, please have them call Cindy Dube at 508-832-6646.

Join us for our next "Spirit Supper" (potluck and book/movie discussion group) on Tuesday, May 15th, beginning at 6 p.m. when we'll be discussing President Jimmy Carter's book, *Faith — A Journey for All*, a New York Times Bestseller.

"In this powerful reflection, President Jimmy Carter contemplates how faith has sustained him in happiness and disappointment. He considers how we may find it in our own lives."

Looking ahead to June, we'll be gathering on Tuesday, June 19th, beginning at 5:30 p.m. for a potluck and movie viewing (title to be announced).

MOTHER'S DAY BAKE SALE

The Choir and Music Committee are holding a bake sale during coffee hour on Mother's Day, May 13th.



This fundraiser benefits the Music Supplemental Fund which is used for "extras" that the music budget doesn't cover, such as compensating guest musicians or to purchase additional new music when the annual music budget has been depleted.

So, look no further when in need of something delicious for Mother's Day!

Note: We will gladly accept your donations of baked goodies. **Thank you!**



Calling All Graduates . . .

If you are aware of any students with ties to First Congregational who will be graduating this spring, please email Denise at: secretary@auburnfirstucc.org or call the Church office, (508) 832-2845. Please include where they're graduating from and when, degree earned, details of their future plans, and list family members (parents/grandparents) who are known within the church.

We would like to acknowledge our graduates in the June *Tidings* and a future Sunday bulletin.

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

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

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

Need additional incentive? This is a church fundraiser — a portion of each cookbook sold goes to the church's general fund. Cookbooks are available for purchase during coffee hours or call Michele at 508-259-2239. You may also email her at library@auburnfirstucc.org. Please include "cookbook" in the subject line of your email. — Happy Cooking!!



June 10th will be the **first Confirmation meeting** for any and all interested teens **AND** their **PARENTS**. The meeting will take place at 11:15 in the green room (just outside fellowship hall). Any questions, please see Pastor Brian.

Confirmation is open to any individual who has completed 7th grade.

Although the new Bibles were dedicated at a worship service in February, and are now in the church pews, some Bibles remain available for "purchase." The purchase price of \$12 each allows for a dedication to be printed onto a label and then affixed to the inside front cover of the pew Bible. This is a wonderful way to pay tribute to a loved one.

Please complete an order form and include a check payable to First Congregational Church noting "Memorial Fund — Bible" in the memo section and return to the church office, 128 Central Street, Auburn, MA 01501, or place in the offering plate on Sunday.

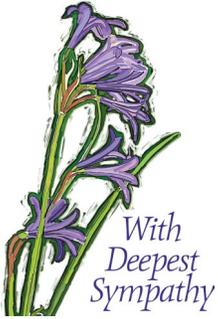
BIBLE ORDER FORM

Name _____

Phone # _____

I would like to purchase _____ (quantity) Bibles at a cost of \$12 each.

Label should read: **(PLEASE PRINT)** _____



Please pray for the Orcutt and Brown families due to the recent passing of their loved ones.

June M. Orcutt, 84, of Auburn, died peacefully at home surrounded by family on March 16. She leaves her husband of 64 years, Frederick B. Orcutt, Sr.; three daughters, Sharon Taglienti, Cindy Sullivan, and Bonnie Orcutt; a son, Brent Orcutt, Jr.; seven grandchildren; six great-grandchildren; nieces and nephews.

June, in addition to being a loving and devoted wife and mother, worked as the Auburn Town Assessor and Auburn Town Accountant. She was a beautiful woman who deeply touched the lives of all she met. She will be greatly missed.

June donated her body to the Anatomical Gifts Program at the UMass Medical School in Worcester. In lieu of services, a gathering for family and friends was held on April 7th at the Chester P. Tuttle Post 279 in Auburn.

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Through a letter sent to Charlotte Steffen, we recently learned of the passing of Mary Lou Brown. The following is an excerpt from that letter:

Dear Charlotte,

You have been a cherished friend of Mary Lou Brown over the years, so I am writing to let you know that God called her home on March 25, 2018.

Mom suffered a stroke on March 7th which affected her right side and ability to swallow. She endured a few days with a nasogastric tube before refusing that treatment. After considering long term tube feeding and her new physical limitations, she chose to, "Let nature take its course." She came home on hospice care on Wednesday, March 21st and peacefully sailed into eternity on Palm Sunday, March 25th.

She is completely free and whole, enjoying a life far richer and purer than the best day on earth. Heaven is full of joy! (see 2 Corinthians, chapter 5 in the Bible, New Testament)

Thank you for being such a good friend to her over the years,

Jennie Anderson (Mary Lou's daughter)

Mary Louise Brown passed gratefully into the arms of her Savior on March 25, 2018. She was 89. She was born Mary Louise Eldridge on May 22, 1928 in New Bedford, Massachusetts. Mary Louise was the daughter of Harold and Elizabeth Eldridge. After graduating from Wareham High School in 1947, she attended the New England Baptist Hospital School of Nursing, becoming a Registered Nurse.

She married Robert E. Brown. The couple resided in Auburn, Massachusetts for 50 years, raising their two children there. In 2008 she moved to Queensbury, New York and enjoyed living with her daughter, son-in-law, and three grandchildren.

Mary Louise loved her Lord Jesus, and enjoyed serving in her local church in many capacities. Many will remember her as a faithful friend. She cherished and maintained relationships from her childhood and "Auburn days" up to the time of her death. She is also admired for the tenacity, and grace she exhibited when dealing with life's challenges, including living with Parkinson's Disease over the last 20 years.

Mary Louise is survived by her son, Joel E. Brown; her daughter, Jennifer C. Anderson; son-in-law, Glen E. Anderson, and their three children; along with her brother, David C. Eldridge and his wife, Priscilla.

A memorial service will be held at 11:30 a.m. on May 19, 2018 at Pine Knolls Alliance Church, 614 Gansevoort Road, South Glens Falls, New York.

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

SATURDAY, JUNE 23rd, 8 A.M. to 2 P.M.



Mark your calendars for our **Community Yard Sale on June 23rd** and begin setting aside items. As we've done in the past, we will rent spaces and tables, plus we'll do all the advertising, and remember, our prime location can't be beat! Sort those items now and prepare to turn that "trash" into "treasure." Spaces are \$15 for church members, \$20 for non-members. Use of a table is \$5 per table. Please contact Cindy Dube at 508-832-6646 or Denise in the church office at 508-832-2845 to secure your spot.



We need your help to make this event a success. You can carry out tables and chairs on Friday night (the 22nd), help serve and clean refreshment tables, help clean-up and return tables inside at the end of the day on Saturday, make a monetary donation to help defray costs, **SHOW YOUR SUPPORT** by donating perennials, renting a yard sale space, shopping at the yard sale, and joining us for hamburgers, hot dogs and strawberry shortcake. Remember to invite lots of friends and family to join you!

Returning again this year **we will be having a church table at the yard sale**, so when doing your spring cleaning, keep the church in mind. **Beginning May 28th**, your items may be dropped off and stored in the first Sunday school classroom on the right when entering from the parking lot (the room opposite Jean's office). **Please make sure your items are clean and in working order.** Books will also be accepted.

TIDINGS is a monthly publication of

**First Congregational Church,
United Church of Christ
128 Central St., Auburn MA 01501**

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

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

Web: auburnfirstucc.org



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Non-Profit Org.
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Auburn, Mass

May 2018						
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OR CURRENT RESIDENT