



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!'"

Easter is a bigger, grander, more holy day in the life of the Church than Christmas. Easter celebrates the purpose and the culmination of the incarnation. In the words of a Huron Indian Christmas Card, "Jesus came for to die." If the resurrection had not occurred there would never have been a reason for people to ask, "How and why was Jesus born?" There is so much that is appealing about the birth stories that the Passion narrative seems ugly and painful by comparison.

But we worship a risen Savior, his death upon the cross is reason for our forgiven sin and our redemption. This Lenten Season is the time for putting our spiritual houses in order, for refreshing our souls, and correcting a year of forgotten good intentions. Come, be a part of our worshipping community during Lent, Holy Week, and Easter.

We need each other.

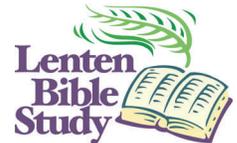
God Bless,

Rev. Dr. Kenneth E. Knox
Pastor

Lenten Bible Study

We are holding a Lenten Bible Study on Thursday mornings in March from 9:30 am until 10:45 am.

Our Bible Study will focus on the Life of Jesus. All are welcome to join us.



All Are Welcome



Come & Join Us

LENTEN CALENDAR

The Passion Story will be presented on March 18th. Five anthems will take us through Gethsemane to Jesus' death.

Palm Sunday is April 1st ~ 10 am Worship Service

Maundy Thursday is April 5th ~ 7 pm service

Good Friday is April 6th ~ First Congregational Church will have the Sanctuary open from 1 until 3 pm for meditation

Good Friday Community Service will be at Bethel Lutheran Church, 90 Bryn Mawr Ave., Auburn at 12:15 pm

Easter Sunday is April 8th ~ with a Sunrise Service at 6:30 am, a 9:00 am Worship Service and a 10:30 am Worship Service

Happy

Birthday



Birthday wishes go out to:

Barbara Niles ~ March 20th
Jean McPherson ~ March 26th

We'd love to acknowledge your special day. Just fill out a Birthday/Anniversary form (located on a table in Fellowship Hall) and leave completed/signed forms in the church office.



News from Outreach

New Orleans is calling to us again! Outreach is excited to report that First Congregational can reserve five slots on another mission trip to New Orleans from **November 10-17**. We will need to send deposits soon to hold these spots, so please contact Reverend Knox or the Outreach Committee soon if you are interested.

For more information on the trip, visit: <http://www.myplanet.net/wamsucc/WAYSneworleans.html>

In our church bulletins we've recently read about **Kathy Coleman's** wonderful mission trip to help cleft palate children in Ecuador. Outreach is pleased to be providing a cash donation to help this worthy cause.

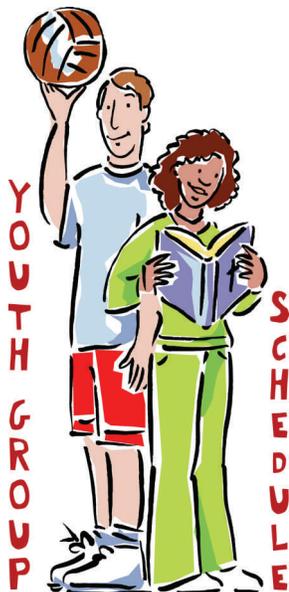
Let us know if you are interested in attending the **UCC Synod meeting**, June 22-26.

As the *UCC Massachusetts Conference News* puts it, "All Conference members should take advantage of this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to meet as the Massachusetts Conference, United Church of Christ, with members from all over the nation and to celebrate 50 years of United Church of Christ history and ministry!"

If there is sufficient interest, we are considering renting a van for a day trip on Saturday, June 23. Registration for Synod is \$50 per person, although a sponsorship might be available. Please let us know if you are interested so we can plan accordingly.

Sincerely,
The Outreach Committee
Ellie Lowell, Cindy Dube, Gayle Farley, Alicia Schillinger, Ernie Smith

YOUTH ON A MISSION



We have a lot coming up this spring and we're gearing up for our annual mission trip.

Our group will be going to Pikeville, Kentucky from July 14th–22nd. We'll be working with the Pikeville Housing Authority to repair homes. I am proud and elated to say that we have twelve youth committed to this year's trip. Todd Dube has graciously offered to go along as our required third adult.

Once again we are partnering with the Sutton church for our annual dinner and auction on Saturday, March 24th. Dinner and preview of items begins at 5:00 pm, bidding begins promptly at 6:30 pm. Dinner features baked ziti along with bread and salad. The cost is \$8 for adults and \$5 for children and will be available on a first come, first served basis. We've already got some fantastic donations that include a hot air balloon ride, Patriots tickets, Red Sox tickets, restaurant gift certificates as well as handmade items. Please see Jennifer or Randy if you have an item you'd like to donate, but more importantly **please support YOM by coming to the auction.** The increase in YOM members also means an increase in the cost of our mission trip and we'll need all the help we can get.

We are also planning our annual Easter candy sale and perhaps a Sunday bowling trip. Details will be in upcoming weekly bulletins.

YOM Members: Michael Brothers, Amy Cariglio, Kasey Dube, Michael Dube, Rachel Dube, Toni Dube, Tegan Folsom, Amanda Gemme, Josh Green, Kelsea Hanks, Joseph Lemke and Mary Wetzel. Adult members include Jennifer and Randy Bohn and Todd Dube.

PLEASE SAVE THE DATE

The Worcester Area Mission Society (WAMS), UCC, invites you to attend A Reception Celebrating the Blooming of Hope in New Orleans. The event will be held on Saturday, April 21 from 7-10 pm at Tower Hill Botanic Garden, 11 French Drive in Boylston, MA. The evening will feature music, savories, cash bar, visits to the Orangerie, (a subtropical greenhouse) and a silent auction. The cost for the event is \$25 per person. Invitations and additional information will be forthcoming.

Recovery efforts sponsored by WAMS and partner congregations include regular work trips to repair damaged houses and churches, a Teacher - to - Teacher program to assist educators in Gulf Coast elementary and middle schools, Books for Kids, and a New England summer camp program for New Orleans youth.



For more information about the reception, please contact Bob Bachelder at wamsucc@bigplanet.com or 508-832-3937.



March is National Brain Injury Awareness Month, National Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month, National Multiple Sclerosis Education and Awareness Month, National Nutrition Month, Save Your Vision Month, and Workplace Eye Health and Safety Month. March 4 -10 is National Patient Safety Awareness Week. March 5-11 is Multiple Sclerosis Awareness Week. March 27 is American Diabetes Alert Day.

I will have information on these illnesses on the table in Fellowship Hall. I also have web site addresses for more information if you need it.

Today, Feb. 20th, a babysitting class is starting and will continue tomorrow. There will be another class on Tuesday and Wednesday of April school vacation.

I continue to get coupons for Lifeline installations. "Help! I've fallen and can't get up" The coupon is for \$80.00 off. The brochure says the system costs about \$1.00/day. They offer a free in home demonstration. When these coupons get ready to expire, they'll probably send more. If not, I have information to get more.

Spring is coming, along with Easter and new beginnings.

Sincerely,
Debbie Pranaitis, RN
Parish Nurse



Coffee Hour Hosts

3/4 ~ Stewardship
3/11 ~ Outreach
3/18 ~ Outreach
3/25 ~ Music



EQUAL EXCHANGE COFFEE PROJECT

We have approved an equal exchange coffee program and expect to begin selling bags of coffee during coffee hour on Sundays in the near future.

Equal Exchange is a worker-owned fair trade organization. It is committed to small coffee farmers in Latin America, Africa and Asia. Purchasing coffee from Equal Exchange provides these poor farmers with fair prices, cooperatives, credit and ecologically sustainable farming practices. It also develops trade partnerships.

This will be a chance to support Fair Trade and is sponsored at the First Congregational Church by the Board of Christian Outreach.

Look for more information to follow.



The 26th General Synod

The 26th General Synod of the United Church of Christ will be in Hartford, CT, Friday, June 22, 2007 through Tuesday, June 26, 2007.

Church members are encouraged to participate and see the U.C.C. in action in a different way than we usually experience it. Because of security concerns everyone who attends must register (\$50) in advance. It is the 50th anniversary celebration of the U.C.C. Look for more information to come.



As I sit here writing for the *March Tidings* I do so from home since this is *Here We Grow's* first snow day. We have been fortunate that this winter has been mild, SO FAR.

Starting off the month of February was *Here We Grow's* third and final fundraiser for this school year. If anyone needs something from Yankee Candle, stop in the church office or the HWG office to check out the catalog. The fundraiser runs the month of February.

On February 13th & 14th the children had Valentine parties in their classrooms. They had made bags to hold all their treasures they received from their friends. Since the 14th was a snow day, the four year old classes had their party on the Friday before vacation.

The Open House went well with about fifty to sixty parents and children coming to visit. At this time the four year old slots are filled and only a few openings are left in the a.m. and p.m. three year old slots. If you know of someone with a three year old, please send them our way. Many of the parents who visited *Here We Grow* were very pleased and impressed with how nice, clean, and bright the space we use is. It is nice to know all the hard work it takes is not unnoticed. Helping to make this happen are Craig Premo, Wayne Prouty and Dave Sampson. Thanks for all you do.

The third week of February will find us on vacation. We are looking forward to it. Now I hope we have NICE weather.

Looking ahead to the month of March, it looks to be a very busy one at *Here We Grow* Preschool. March is Parent Volunteer Month and we are hoping many of them will be spending time in the classrooms as helpers, story tellers or mad scientists. Neal Primeaux will be spending two days with us taking pictures of each class and also individual pictures of each child. The Auburn Police will be visiting the four year old classes to fingerprint each child. All fingerprints will be sent home for parents to have in the case of an emergency. I hope one will never have to use them.

Until next month, stay safe and healthy.

Dawn Murphy
Here We Grow Preschool Director



LIBRARY TIDINGS

By Gloria Whitehead

Perhaps you're inclined to feel political strength is the prime issue of many who govern us, instead of the spectrum of vital issues which affect the future, long and short range, of our nation. Could Lent appeal to you as an appropriate 40 days to do a bit of introspection and to find a source of strengthening your faith and prayers? You can begin in the library.

In the past, books for Lenten reading have been on display in Fellowship Hall. A list of more of the same with a brief description of the contents of each follows and the library table displays a few books which relate to the Bible Study of the Life of Jesus which Pastor Ken will conduct.

How to Hear from God by Joyce Meyer - Learn to know His voice and make the right decisions. God won't force us to do His will, but He will do everything He can to encourage us to say yes to His way.

Christ's Passion - the Power and Promise by D. James Kennedy with Jerry Newcombe includes colorful, eyewitness accounts from Pontius Pilate, Caiaphas, Thomas and Longinus, the Roman Centurion, to bring a human perspective to the events of the week that changed the world. The author who, among other services to the church has been president of an international Christian broadcasting system, takes you past Calvary to the empty tomb, as he gathers compelling arguments for the claim that Christ is risen indeed. Carole Murray gifted this book.

God Came Near by Max Lucado - is new to our library. You want to follow Christ but at times you lose sight of Him at a personal level. You may rely on all sorts of religious leaders, writers and individuals who are inspired, but you're looking for more than a second-hand faith. How can you have this closer look fulfilled?

The Jesus Style by Gayle D. Erwin - Pastor Ken recognized this book that was featured on the coffee table last Sunday, and commented that it was easy to read and good. The first printed page in the book reads, "Ronald N. Haynes Publishers, Inc. is committed to publishing significant work with new ideas and re-publishing time-tested work that can change the world in the name of Jesus Christ."

"If you who have picked up this book are a Christian you have experienced the joy and challenge that Jesus brings to life. If you are not a Christian, read on—you may see why so many people throughout the ages have entered the family of the forgiven and found there both peace and purpose through Jesus Christ."

Read For Renewal

**Caroline F. (Freeland)
Malkasian**

**July 1, 1913 to
Feb. 17, 2007**



Caroline F. (Freeland) Malkasian, 93, formerly of Auburn, died peacefully Saturday, Feb. 17, 2007 at Epoch Senior Health Care of Brewster, MA. She was married to Hagop H. Malkasian for 63 years; he died in July of 2001. She leaves two sons, Neil A. Malkasian and Alan E. Malkasian and his wife, Barbara; three granddaughters, six great - grandchildren and several nieces and nephews. She was predeceased by her sister, Evelyn F. Smith.

Caroline fostered many children for the Children's Friend's Society of Worcester, MA. She was an active member of our church for over 60 years, serving on many committees. A funeral service was held here on Wednesday, February 21st. Memorial contributions can be made to the First Congregational Church Memorial Fund, 128 Central Street, Auburn, MA 01501 or to the National Parkinson Foundation, Inc., Office of Development, 1501 N.W. 9th Avenue, Bob Hope Road, Miami, FL 33136-1494.

Please remember Caroline's family and friends in your prayers.



Congratulations go out to Elizabeth Esposito and Jeffrey Allain on the birth of their son, Connor Paul Allain, born on February 5, 2007.

Proud grandparents are Leonard and Barbara Allain, and Jane and the late Paul Standring.

**Heifer International's
Overlook Farm**

Pancakes at the Farm
March 3, 10, 17 & 24th
9:00 am to 1:00 pm

Observe the maple sugaring operation, see the farm animals and enjoy a hearty pancake feed with maple syrup and pork sausage.

Adults: \$8 Children (ages 4-10) \$5.00
Children 3 and under are free

Please call 508-886-2221 for reservations.

Auburn Cultural Council

The Auburn Cultural Council is planning a trip to the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library & Museum for Saturday, April 21, 2007. The tour will leave the Auburn Mall at 9 am and return at 5:30. The \$40 price, which is being subsidized by the Auburn Cultural Council, includes transportation by Silver Fox Coach, admission to the museum and special "A Journey Home" exhibit, Quincy Market shopping and a full course luncheon at Boston's No Name Restaurant. For more information, please call Kathy Papineau at 508-754-8489.

SANCTUARY NEWS

The board of Trustees is pleased to announce that we are planning to undertake a major renovation of the sanctuary. Our new roof is on the building and is good for another fifty years. Now we can concentrate on the interior. It has been more than twenty-five years since the sanctuary has been refurbished. The past roof leaks, peeling paint and worn carpet are signs of a tired interior.

We are all committed and enthusiastic about this project; however, we will need the help and support of the congregation in order to proceed. We believe that the repairs of the cracked walls and ceiling should be done correctly and for the long term. This will require a substantial investment in the future of our church, one that will be rewardingly visible to all upon completion.

Our plans include complete plasterboard of the church interior; this would include the choir room, narthex and sanctuary. Even the paneling would be covered with plasterboard and after plastering, all would be painted.

To facilitate all this work in the sanctuary, the pews would be removed to Fellowship Hall where they will be restained and repainted. New carpet will be installed in the sanctuary before the pews are returned.

In order to pay for this renovation, we are soliciting a three-year commitment from our church family to raise sufficient funds that will allow us to start the process. The Prudential Committee feels that we could start the work the summer after a third of the money is received. The remaining two - thirds could be borrowed from our long term invested funds provided that we have commitments to repay the borrowed funds within the two following years.

The target cost to accommodate all these renovations is expensive. Preliminary estimates run about \$100,000. We were able to raise \$60,000 for the new roof and we are praying that we can have the same dedication and enthusiasm for this sanctuary project.

Individual responses to this financial commitment will be held in confidence in the same manner as church pledges are handled. Lori Stockhaus has agreed to be the focal point for responses and annual reporting.

FROM THE CHOIR ROOM:

Divine Timing

Although our choral anthems do not have to correlate with the church's liturgical calendar, there have been many instances where the anthem spoke exactly to the sermon, as well as other occurrences obviously guided by the Spirit. I'd like to share them here.

Last year, not having the finances for new choir robes, we tried to purchase 12 used robes from another church, but were turned down. Shortly thereafter, more new people joined the choir; now we needed 16 robes, an even bigger expense! The funds, however, miraculously appeared—Divine Timing!

Cindy Dube arrived back from the mission trip requesting *Here I Am, Lord* to be sung as a hymn for their special service on January 28th. One month prior, I'd completed the planning of anthems through May, scheduling *Here I Am, Lord* for January 28th—Divine Timing!

Last fall, I received inspiration regarding fundraising for the music ministry—tied in with honoring loved ones. I'd just put the "Music Memorial" idea together the very night we found out the music fund finished in a deficit for 2006. We immediately received 3 donations towards the music fund—Divine Timing!

The first person to donate for the memorial did so because I'd unknowingly scheduled her family's favorite anthem to be sung directly before her mother's birthday—Diving Timing!

By 2006, the choir room piano was too old to stay in tune making it impossible to rehearse with as the singers could not match the pitch. Out of the blue, Connie Hodgkins called Rev. Knox regarding the donation of her husband's Yamaha piano. (George Hodgkins was minister here at one time and also a musician.) During our phone conversation she told me "Although we have several children it could go to, I feel strongly this is what George would want." Once again—Diving Timing!

Blessings,

Heather Moore
Minister of Music

"Then all the trees of the forest will sing for joy; they will sing before the Lord, for he comes . . ."

Psalm 96:12-13

Of Note:

“The Passion Story” will be presented on March 18th, the fourth Sunday of Lent. Five anthems will take us through Gethsemane:

- *Who Is Jesus*
- *The Olive Garden*
- *Come Kneel at the Cross*
- *Tears Slowly Fall*
- *And He Died*

Also, Rolph Holly will be guest trumpeter for both Easter Services on April 8th. Rolph is a graduate of the Julliard School of Music and currently manages a CVS in Worcester. He lives in East Longmeadow with his wife, Diane, a nurse, and their 5 year old son, Nicholas.

Joyful Noyse Rehearsal Schedule

3/4, 3/11 & 3/18	11:15 AM rehearsal
3/25	9:15 AM rehearsal <i>May You Have Peace</i>
4/1	11:15 AM rehearsal
4/8	Easter (no early rehearsal) <i>Keeping My Eye On You Lord</i>
4/15, 4/22, 4/29	11:15 AM rehearsal
5/6, 5/13	11:15 AM rehearsal
5/20	9:15 AM rehearsal (pieces to be announced)

Easter Plant Order Form



Lilies 7" pot (1 stem) \$10.00 _____
Tulips 8" pot \$10.00 _____

Color Choice: Yellow _____
 Purple _____ Pink _____

Red _____ Orange _____
Hyacinth Blue _____ White _____ \$10.00
Pink _____

Dedication:

From: _____

In Memory of _____

In Celebration for the Life of _____

Name: _____

Phone: _____

Please submit your order form no later than April 1, 2007 so that you may receive your first choice. Please request additional forms if you would like to order more than one plant. Extra order forms are available from a Deacon and in Fellowship Hall.

If you have questions, please call Connie or Ron Hanks at 508-832-4227 or the church office at 508-832-2845.

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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 Permit No. 6
 Auburn, Mass

March 2007

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