



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!’”

Beauty, Truth, and Love ... at “The Shack”

Reflections from your Interim Pastor, Reverend Mark Seifried

*In my Father’s house there are many dwelling places ...
I am the way, and the truth, and the life. John 14:2, 6a*

Several years ago a man regularly attended worship at a church where I preached each Sunday. He made it clear at our first introduction that he was an agnostic, bordering on atheist. He wondered if this was a problem for me. I told him it wasn’t a problem at all. In fact, I told him that I believed he was giving voice to what many of our church members felt from time to time. Also, I told him that the United Church of Christ was a “big tent” denomination. We have people from the far left to the far right both theologically and socially ... and there’s room for us all!

Back to the concern of agnosticism: the reality is that many of us go through periods of agnosticism ... only we rarely admit to it in the company of other believers. Read the Psalms or some of the other books of the Bible and you will find that agnostics have been part of the faithful as long as there have been believers. Faith is not the same as belief. When my faith wanes, your faith upholds me. That’s why we practice our faith together. Most of us waver between weak and strong faith over the course of a year and throughout our lives. I believe that it’s far healthier to live in a state of doubt than it is to be in a constant state of “lukewarm” faith. Scripture agrees!

My agnostic friend wanted to know how I defined God to an agnostic. My response was that I believed God to be Beauty, Truth and Love. This is perhaps a parallel understanding of the Trinitarian definition of the divine with God as Beauty, Jesus as Truth, and the Holy Spirit as Love. My friend could understand God as Beauty, Truth, and Love, but could not subscribe to Father, Son and Holy Ghost. I think that’s fine. Human language cannot contain the totality of God. Any time we think we have encapsulated the whole reality of God we actually have put God in a box and minimized our understanding. That’s why we call our spiritual life a journey. There are always twists and turns, new horizons and expanded understandings of the Holy.

So it was last week when I read a book by William Paul Young entitled “The Shack.” This book is a masterpiece and one that I will give away by the dozens. I believe it should be a primer for Christians, but also a gift for agnostics who want to understand the beauty, truth and love of the Christian faith. It’s a piece of fiction, but a fiction that is so steeped in beauty, truth and love that it’s as genuine as any Christian writing I’ve read. It’s a book that my aunt, a Roman Catholic nun, sent to me with accolades and one that set a “New Age” friend of mine on spiritual fire.

It’s Lent. I am not one to suggest people to give up anything for the sake of saying “I gave up BLANK for Lent.” I say, “Do whatever it takes to grow in faith during Lent.” Set time aside for intentional growth. Read “The Shack,” especially if you are wandering in a spiritual wilderness. You may very well find yourself falling in love with a God who previously was elusive. You may well understand Creator, Christ and Spirit for the first time. You will discover Beauty, Truth and Love at “The Shack.” Jesus is there, too!

P.S. “The Shack” is available in the Church Library.

Creation Waits with Eager Longing: A Journey through Lent

Lent is a time during the church year when we are asked to examine our relationships with God and with one another. Surely there is no better indicator of our love for God than through our connection with the world with which God entrusted us. Our love of humanity is also evident in our care for the planet because what we do now affects people all over the globe and will for many years to come. This will be the main crux of worship throughout the Sundays of Lent. Rather than staying stuck in confession and mourning, though, Pastor Mark will weave suggestions for various spiritual practices into the sermon that may help us see our role in God's creation differently.

Each week the themes will expand, ranging from "reflection" to "recommitment." This ecumenical series is geared toward advocacy and action in a range of environmental issues. It will lead us finally to our celebration of Easter, the Lord's triumph over death, when we rejoice in the good news of God's power for redemption, renewal and the reconciliation of all things. This would be a great time to invite friends to church and for us to grow together as a renewing community of faith.

Be a Part of the SOLUTION!

There are many simple things you can do in your daily life — what you eat, what you drive, how you build your home — that can have an effect on your immediate surrounding, and on places as far away as Antarctica. Here is a list of a few things that you can do to make a difference.

Use Compact Fluorescent Bulbs

Replace 3 frequently used light bulbs with compact fluorescent bulbs. Save 300 lbs. of carbon dioxide and \$60 per year.

Inflate Your Tires

Keep the tires on your car adequately inflated. Check them monthly. Save 250 lbs. of carbon dioxide and \$840 per year.

Change Your Air Filter

Check your car's air filter monthly. Save 800 lbs. of carbon dioxide and \$130 per year.

Fill the Dishwasher

Run your dishwasher only with a full load. Save 100 lbs. of carbon dioxide and \$40 per year.

Use Recycled Paper

Make sure your printer paper is 100% post consumer recycled paper. Save 5 lbs. of carbon dioxide per ream of paper.

Adjust Your Thermostat

Move your heater thermostat down two degrees in winter and up two degrees in the summer. Save 2000 lbs. of carbon dioxide and \$98 per year.

Check Your Water Heater

Keep your water heater thermostat no higher than 120°F. Save 550 lbs. of carbon dioxide and \$30 per year.

Take Shorter Showers

Showers account for 2/3 of all water heating costs. Save 350 lbs. of carbon dioxide and \$99 per year.

Install a Low-Flow Showerhead

Using less water in the shower means less energy to heat the water. Save 350 lbs. of carbon dioxide and \$150.

Buy Products Locally

Buy locally and reduce the amount of energy required to drive your products to your store.

Buy Minimally Packaged Goods

Less packaging could reduce your garbage by about 10%. Save 1,200 pounds of carbon dioxide and \$1,000 per year.

Buy a Hybrid Car

The average driver could save 16,000 lbs. of CO₂ and \$3,750 per year driving a Hybrid.

Buy a Fuel Efficient Car

Getting a few extra miles per gallon makes a big difference. Save thousands of lbs. of CO₂ and a lot of money per year.

Carpool When You Can

Own a big vehicle? Carpooling with friends and co-workers saves fuel. Save 790 lbs. of carbon dioxide and hundreds of dollars per year.

Continued on next page

Be A Part of the Solution continued . . .

Reduce Garbage

Buy products with less packaging and recycle paper, plastic and glass. Save 1,000 lbs. of carbon dioxide per year.

Plant a Tree

Trees suck up carbon dioxide and make clean air for us to breathe. Save 2,000 lbs. of carbon dioxide per year.

Weatherize Your Home

Caulk and weather strip your doorways and windows. Save 1,700 lbs. of carbon dioxide and \$274 per year.

Unplug Unused Electronics

Even when electronic devices are turned off, they use energy. Save over 1,000 lbs of carbon dioxide and \$256 per year.

Put on a Sweater

Instead of turning up the heat in your home, wear more clothes. Save 1,000 lbs. of carbon dioxide and \$250 per year.

Insulate Your Home

Make sure your walls and ceilings are insulated. Save 2,000 lbs. of carbon dioxide and \$245 per year.

Air Dry Your Clothes

Line-dry your clothes in the spring and summer instead of using the dryer. Save 700 lbs. of carbon dioxide and \$75 per year.

Buy Organic Food

The chemicals used in modern agriculture pollute the water supply, and require energy to produce.

Stewardship Message *Checking Our Balance*

For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven: a time to be born and a time to die; a time to plant and a time to pluck up what is planted ... (Ecclesiastes 3: 1-2)

How about these improvisations on this familiar text about the “seesaw” of life:

A time to break down our budgets – at home or church -- in new ways, and a time to build them up by asset mapping. A time to weep for recession, unemployment and homelessness, and a time to meet doomsayers with humor and hope. A time to mourn for the time—famine of contemporary families, and a time to dance with our faithful volunteers. A time to embrace generosity, and a reminder to refrain from embracing consumerism. A time to keep – recycle, re-use, renew – in church and home -- and time to throw away responsibly. A time to tear our clothes on a mission trip with teens, and a time to knit prayer shawls in the parlor. A time to love our children enough to teach them stewardship, and a wake up call whenever and wherever they learn hatred for themselves or others. A time-out for war, and an always time-enough to work for peace ... a peace for every season that blesses God’s purpose under heaven.

It is March – the month of balance. Life isn’t like Daylight Savings time – we cannot “make” hours or resources or energy or sunshine. On the other hand, the Spring Equinox is a true teaching moment. We even use the word “balance” financially. The “balance” is what we work with, give with, use to care for ourselves and others. Financially, emotionally, and spiritually, as individuals and as communities of faith, this is the season to commit ourselves to balance.

Maren C. Tirabassi is Pastor of Union Congregational UCC of Madbury, NH.
Her most recent book is *God in My Life: How and Why We Share Faith Stories*.



March 2009 God is still speaking,

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



March is Mental Retardation Awareness Month, National Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month, National Kidney Month, National Brain Injury Awareness Month, National Endometriosis Awareness Month, National Multiple Sclerosis Education and Awareness Month, National Nutrition Month, Save Your Vision Month, and Workplace Eye Wellness Month. March 1-7 is National Problem Gambling Awareness Week. March 2-6 is National School Breakfast Week, March 13 is World Kidney Day, the 15th-21st is National Poison Prevention Week. March 24th is World Tuberculosis Day and American Diabetes Alert Day. March 29 - April 4th is Root Canal Awareness Week.

I have received many coupons for the Philips Lifeline. If you know anyone who needs one, please take them from the table in Fellowship Hall. The coupon is for \$90.00 off the activation fee (free activation). Even if it's for someone down the street or someone you know of through a friend, please take them.

I just sponsored another babysitting class. It was a success and we're having another one during April school vacation. It's almost full, so if you're interested, call Pam Sheeran at Memorial Family Health Department (508) 334-6485.

Pastor Mark and I are getting together a class on "End of Life Issues." The class will be held on March 31st at 7 p.m. **Please see the form enclosed or go to: www.auburnfirstucc.org to register.**

God Bless!

Deborah Pranaitis, Parish Nurse

Notes from Stewardship...

My Dad turns 75 years old on February 27th. We are planning a big celebration for this event. For his life and his role in mine, I am thankful.

For this milestone celebration of my Dad's life, I have been circulating the Gratitude Book. This book, in its intentional use, is meant as a personal journal for each of us, who has the fortune of owning one, to take a moment each day to reflect and write down something, one thing, for which we are thankful. I thought it an appropriate gift to my Dad for each one of us who knows him to take a moment to reflect on their personal relationship with him and to share that moment in writing with him. What good is a eulogy of a man's or woman's life if that person is not here to listen, enjoy and share in those personal moments of gratitude and love? I thought it appropriate to share these reflections with my Dad before he meets his Maker rather than after.

I start off this *Tidings* article mentioning this because in the Stewardship Publication this month, the main article talks about being thankful...about giving thanks or being thankful to God for all that we are and have.

I also give thanks to my biological father for all that he has given me, for all that he has taught me. He is an extraordinary man and one of great faith. He has taught me to be all that I can be and that I can be and do anything I want to be and do. The only restrictions on this are ones that I put on myself...and, ultimately, he has taught me to remember that all that I have is a gift from God.

As the article states, God gives to us not to make us thankful, but to make us generous and useful to him and to others! True thanksgiving begins with being genuinely grateful to God. The true fruit of genuine gratitude and thanksgiving is how we use and what we do with what God has blessed us with. Each day during our individual prayer time with God, we should share our gratitude with Him.

It is my hope that 2009 will be a year of spiritual introspection for each of us and may God lead us in ways we can only imagine...from our Pastoral Search to successfully continuing in our various ministries to spreading the Good Word to those around us to inviting others to join us in worship.

God Bless you all....and remember, in your prayers give thanks to God for all that he has blessed you with.

In His Love,
Michele Schillinger



As I sit here writing for the March *Tidings*, I am doing it just before February vacation. If I wait until after vacation, I will be late again. It is hard to think of March when it is the mid-way mark of February.

Happenings during the month of February - our final fundraiser, Yankee Candle, was run. I will give you an update on the outcome in April's *Tidings*. We did run it for four weeks in February, giving parents the vacation week to seek out all relatives.

The children and staff celebrated Valentine's Day with parties on the 12th & 13th. The children all had the opportunity to be mail carriers during circle time. They had a great time. The parents provided snacks which consisted of Rice Krispie squares and juice.

We have had many new visitors come to *Here We Grow* to check us out for next year. Most come to HWG because a friend, neighbor or relative has recommended us. That is our best form of advertising. Our Open House was scheduled for January 29th, BUT we had a snow delay. We re-scheduled it for February 23, 1:30-3:00. We have spots available in the 2-day sessions with all 3-day & 5-day spots filled. We are hoping for the 3-year-old spots to fill up within the next few months. With the economy as it is, we may see a decline in 3-year-olds for next year. If you know of anyone looking for a preschool for a child of 3, please send them our way. Many of the visitors remarked how well kept and clean the classrooms, hallways and vestry are. I'd like to thank Craig Premo, Dave Sampson, Stan MacPhee, and Wayne Prouty for the extra "things" they do to help HWG out.

Looking ahead to March, we will be offering Parent Volunteer Month: parents can spend time in their child's classroom as a helper for the day, do science experiments, (if they are brave) or read a story at the end of the day. We do have an open door policy throughout the year, but we find with Parent Volunteer Month, many parents who work will take a day off and come spend it with their child. We enjoy having the extra set of hands to help. Once again Neal Primaeux will be here the first week of March for picture taking. The Auburn Police are scheduled for a day of fingerprinting, which we send home for the parents.

Until next month, stay healthy and safe.

Dawn Murphy, *Here We Grow* Director

Our next church supper is planned for
Saturday, March 21st, at 5:00 p.m.
On the menu: Roast Beef Dinner
Adults \$10 Children \$5

We are in need of a group or
individuals to commit as servers.

Coffee Hour Hosts

3/1 ~ Stewardship	3/29, 4/5 ~ Trustees
3/8 ~ Girl Scouts	4/12 ~ Easter
3/15 ~ Outreach	4/19 ~ Music
3/22 ~ Music	

Library Tidings
by Gloria Whitehead

The Library had an unexpected surprise from Gloria Beauregard, Susan Klaucke's mother. Again she has given us a series of 8 Guidepost Books which are entitled *Mystery & the Minister's Wife*. We're grateful to you, Mrs. Beauregard.

It's an easy way to say goodbye to books that you no longer want by just putting them in a bag and leaving them somewhere around the church. Many may be well intended with appropriate contents, but we've had to throw them away when they might have been good to give to a friend to read instead. Books with personal messages written on the inside cover, books that are dog-eared or discolored, etc. obviously do not belong in a public/church library. There are already some faded or "tanned" books on the shelves, but they've been retained for a variety of reasons. However, as mentioned before, if you come upon any book in the church libraries which you feel is questionable, do say something. We're grateful to several people who've done this.

Among current bestsellers is *The Shack* by William Paul Young, and given by Sue Campbell. It has stirred many minds and Pastor Mark reviews it in this month's *Tidings*.

Children are so programmed with activity these days that it delights us to have them in the Children's Library thumbing through books before and after Sunday School. Also, budgets can be pared and housecleaning modified by borrowing rather than buying. Challenge us to keep us on our toes and tell us if you'd like to help and how. That would be great!

May God strengthen and guide us as we evaluate our use of time and talents. We thank Him for the many blessings that we may not recognize.



Daylight Saving Time
begins March 8th.

Be sure to turn your clocks
ahead before retiring on
Saturday night, March 7th.

Happy Birthday to:

MacKenzie Lillian Young - March 16th

Barbara Niles - March 20th

Jean McPherson - March 26th



Estate Planning?

Have you included the church in your will or estate planning?
Please prayerfully consider if the Lord would have you remember
your church when completing your will.

*"One of the greatest missing teachings in the American church today is
the reminder to men and women that nothing we have belongs to us."*

Gordon MacDonald, American Pastor & Teacher

SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATIONS

Applications are now available in
Fellowship Hall, and in the church office
for anyone interested in applying
for a scholarship.

Applications are due by April 15th.

From the Church Historians . . .

The following is an excerpt from a ledger that was stored in the Town Hall basement. It outlines step-by-step decisions made by our men in building our meetinghouse and forming our town.

George DuHamel & Paula Lubin
Church Historians

LEDGER 1773-1786

January ye 16, 1775 At a legal meting in the South Parish in Worcester.

I choes Mr. Charles Richardson moderator for sais meting.

Attest. Jacob Stevens. Voted to agourn said meeting 10 minutes to the hous of Mr. Thomas Drury inholder. Upon agourment met.

Voted to reserve a pue at the rite hand of the pulpit for the yous of the Parish.

Voted to dispose of the remainder of the pies within the Parish to finish the in side of the meting hous.

Voted to choes a committee to devise the pue with in the Parish to finish the in side of the meting hous.

Voted to choes a committee to devise the pue ground and signify the pues.

Voted to choes y' for Said committee. Chose Mr. Charles Richardson, Samuel Eddy, Jonathan Stone, John Crowl, Aimothy Carter.

Voted that Said committy make return to said Parish upon agourment.

Voted to choes a committee to pick a buring yeard. Voted to choes Mr. Thomas Drury, Wilyam Phips, David Boydon, John Hart, Beniaman Carter. Voted that said committee make return as sone as.

Voted to agourn said meting to Monday the 23 of this month instant at 9 of the clock in the morn- ing at the meting hous.

January ye 23 upon agourment voted to accept of the plan for the pues. Voted to choes a Com- mittee to Signifi the pues. Chose Mr. John Hart, Jesse Stone, Petor Boydon, Issac Putnam, Tho- mas Drury a committee.

Voted to agourn said meting 2 ours to this plais. Upon agourment met. Voted to except the Said report of Said Committy. Voted that the heist paid taiks his chois of the pues and pais the heist som by evesashon. Voted that where two hands equail in rail estait thean the personalestait is to Cary the choice in a pue. Voted that the valiation br peceed for two years yeait to com. Voted to agourn this meting to Monday the 6 day of Febuary at the meting hous at 9 of the clock in the morning. Agourment met. Voted to fray the pues on this valuation. Voted that one thoud of the money for the pues be paid in three months. One thoud to be paid in two years from this dait and the meting hous finished.

I would like to thank everyone who contributed to our Souper Bowl for Auburn Youth and Family Services. We raised \$32.00 in donations and enough cans of soup to help out for quite a while.

Unfortunately we had to cancel the 30 hour Famine due to lack of participation. The plan is to contact other Auburn youth groups and try for next year. We did, however, continue with our service project. We created and ran two games at the Special Olympics Olympic Park Carnival that was held at Auburn High School on Saturday the 28th.

We are planning Easter crafts and an Easter egg hunt on Palm Sunday, April 5 from 1:00-3:00. Please sign up ASAP on the Sunday school bulletin board so we can assemble enough supplies. **Everyone** is invited and welcome to attend.

Remember to keep an eye on the sign in the front of the church to see all the beautiful flowers the children planted last fall. Remember that even though we don't always "see" God's love, it is always there and growing to blossom in all of us.

With His guidance we serve.

Jean McPherson, Director of Religious Education

Once again we will be accepting orders for Easter plants. On Easter Sunday there will be a special insert in the bulletin noting who the plant is in honor of and who it's from. This is a wonderful way to pay tribute to a loved one while decorating our church sanctuary at the same time. Just complete the order form below and drop it off at the church or mail it to: FCC, 128 Central St., Auburn, MA 01501. Please submit your order form with payment no later than April 5th.

Easter Plant Order Form

Lilies (1 stem) \$10.00 _____

Lilies (2 stems) \$15.00 _____

Tulips 8" pot (12 bulbs) \$10.00 _____

Due to a mouse in the house (literally) please make a second choice of red or purple if you select any of the other colors as a first choice. A rodent ate several plant tops in one night. Thanks for your understanding and cooperation!

Color Choice: Yellow _____ Pink _____ Orange _____

Red _____ Purple _____

Blue Hyacinth (6 bulbs) \$10.00 _____

Dedication: **(PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY)**

In Memory of _____

In Celebration of _____

Name: _____

Phone: _____

Please submit your order form by Sunday, April 5th. If you have questions, please call Connie or Ron Hanks at 508-832-4227 or the church office at 508-832-2845. Extra order forms are available online, from Denise in the office, from a Deacon or on the table in Fellowship Hall.

YOUTH ON A MISSION

Youth On a Mission will hold its sixth annual auction on Sunday April 19th (the Sunday after Easter). We have a couple of hurdles to overcome this year to make the auction a success.

- 1) Our usual auctioneer will not be able to make it this year.
- 2) We are more in need than ever before for donations. Some of the items that go very well are tickets to shows, sporting events and activities; services such as cooking, cleaning or yard work; furniture either new or gently used; jewelry items; gift baskets, etc.
- 3) We need **YOU** to be there and possibly bring a friend. There's always something for everybody in a variety of price ranges. We **NEED** your support.

We have chosen the date and location of our summer mission trip. We will be going to Darby, PA, a community just outside of Philadelphia the week of July 26th – August 2nd. So far Joe Lemke, Michael Dube, Steven Cariglio, Kelsea Hanks, Sydney Folsom, Kasey Dube, Alyssa Cariglio and Rachel Dube are committed to making the trip. Once again my brother, Kyle, has very generously volunteered to go along as the required third adult; but perhaps more importantly, he brings his many years of experience as a general contractor to our job sites.

On a lighter note, YOM will be going bowling on Sunday March 8th. Any and all, over the age of 13, are welcome to come with us and bring a friend. If you want to go, just let me know so I can plan accordingly. We will have pizza and snacks at the church before we go. It should be about \$15 per person, but I'll let you know for sure.

Thank you for your continued support of YOM.

In God's Service,

Jennifer & Randy Bohn

CENTRAL MASS. GATHERING FOR COMMUNITY ORGANIZING AND BUILDING STRONG CONGREGATIONS

SUNDAY, MARCH 22, 2009 1:30-5:00 p.m.

HOLY CROSS COLLEGE, HOGAN CAMPUS CENTER, ROOM 320

Why do congregations and communities need to organize? How do we put our faith and values to work effectively in the public arena? How do we go beyond our work of charity to enable us to build the power necessary to respond effectively to the challenges facing our families and communities. How can we work with others to address effectively housing, education, jobs and other vital issues in our region? And how can this contribute to building more vital congregations? Questions such as these will be addressed in a three hour session involving clergy and lay leaders from parishes and congregations around Central Massachusetts.

Join with people from other religious institutions at this session facilitated by Frank Kartheiser, Lead Organizer of Worcester Interfaith and Larry Gordon, Organizer with the Industrial Areas Foundation, the nation's oldest and largest community organizing network. This is an important step along the way in building a new Central Massachusetts initiative that will enable our congregations to act in new and powerful ways to engage with each other, as well as act effectively with public and market sectors. Come on Sun. March 22 from 1:30-5 PM at Holy Cross College to hear how:

- Community Organizing is a key strategy for all denominations and faith traditions to develop the capacity for civic engagement.
- Community Organizing is also an intentional way of developing relationships within congregations so members can get to know one another better, listen to each other's stories, and connect their faith with their lives. Community organizing is a valuable tool for developing lay leaders to gain skills, identify challenges and take effective action.

The vision is to move beyond interfaith dialogue to interfaith action. Religious leaders have more in common than we disagree about. Diversity of race, class and faith become not only a foretaste of the Kingdom of God, but a source of strength, influence and growth.

For more information and to sign up, contact Frank Kartheiser at worcester.interfaith@verizon.net or 508-754-5001.

Notes from the Nominating Committee...

The Nominating Committee would like to thank everyone who has stepped up to the plate sharing their time and talents for various committees over the next three years. This is not a commitment to be taken lightly and we appreciate your servitude toward the Lord and First Congregational Church.

With that said, there are committees still needing additional resources in order to meet with the requirements set forth in our Church's by-laws. The open slots we are currently looking to fill are:

- (4) Positions for the Board of Deacons
- (1) Position for the Board of Christian Education
- (3) Positions for the Stewardship Committee.

These open positions are higher than we reported in the February *Tidings* due to the fact that we have had some resignations on these boards/committees over the course of the last month.

As disheartening as it is to receive these resignations, conversely, it is just as gratifying to see and know that several members of the congregation feel strongly enough in their faith and commitment to serve dual roles on committees within our Church in order to overcome these shortfalls and meet the demanding needs of "running" the Church. Unfortunately, it is also the "burnout" from that commitment that leads us to so many vacancies to fill at one time. If each of us were to search deep within our souls and find within ourselves the commitment to do **one** share, there would be no "dual roles" or "burnout."

Are you ready to share your time and talents to fulfill a vacancy?

The call has gone out to all within the congregation to fill these vacancies. If you have not been asked to serve in any of the above roles, we, the Nominating Committee, ask your forgiveness for the oversight. At times, it has been difficult to remember who has been asked to serve and who hasn't. We can only hope that the Lord works within each of you to bring out your hidden talents and desire to serve as well as the courage to speak up and ask what you can do.

If you have the faith and courage to do so, please see any one of the Nominating Committee members to find out more about how you can help serve within your Church.

We look forward to talking with you.

In His Love,

Your Nominating Committee: Kay Shapter (Chair), Michele Schillinger and Pat Bukoski

Equal Exchange Fair Trade Coffee

"A United Church of Christ project linking congregations with small farmers and their families through fair trade."

Coffee \$6.00/bag Tea \$3.00/box

March 15th - April 5th during Coffee Hour

Sponsored by the Board of Christian Outreach

HEIFER INTERNATIONAL
Overlook Farm 216 Wachusett St.
Rutland, Massachusetts 01543

2009 Pancakes at the Farm

March 14th, 21st

9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Observe the maple sugaring operation, tour the farm, and enjoy a hearty pancake breakfast with maple syrup and pork sausage.

Adults \$10, Children 3-10 are \$5.

Children under age 2 are free.

Please call 508-886-2221 to make reservations (required).

Where Is Your Treasure?

“Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” Matthew 6:21

If you were searching for God’s treasure, you’d find it in people. Every person, in every nation on earth, is treasured by God! Yet for many people, life can be searingly tough.

One Great Hour of Sharing joins our hearts with God’s by providing decisive aid when disaster strikes and by helping refugees rebuild their lives. Your gift strengthens struggling communities with basics like education, health care, tools, seeds, and wells.

When we care for God’s treasured children, we ourselves are transformed. We see more clearly what matters most in life and are inspired to live courageously. Our hope rises as we realize new life is possible.

I Timothy 6:18-19a exhorts us, “To do good, to be rich in good works, generous, and ready to share, thus storing up . . . the treasure of a good foundation for the future.” Our treasure lies in honoring God, doing God’s will, and loving God’s treasured people. May you find your treasure, and your heart, through sharing resources and changing lives with a generous gift to **One Great Hour of Sharing**.

“We will be forever changed and grateful . . . people cared enough to come to our rescue, and they will never know what that really did for our children and our families,” says Mary Ellen Calvert. Church World Service and Habitat for Humanity helped her local recovery group work to rebuild her Mississippi community following the 2005 Gulf Coast hurricanes. Your support of **One Great Hour of Sharing** helps families rebuild from disasters — here in the U.S. and around the world.

The OGHS special mission offering is received through local UCC congregations and all UCC members are encouraged to participate in this way. Secure online contributions to **One Great Hour of Sharing** may be made at www.ucc.org/oghs. You will also find offering envelopes included in this month’s *Tidings*, which you can complete and mail back to us at 128 Central Street, Auburn, MA 01501. Please note: an offering will be collected during our church services in March. Thank you for your support.

Joyful Noyse Schedule

3/1, 3/8, 3/15	11:15 a.m. rehearsal	4/19, 4/26	11:15 a.m. rehearsal
3/22	9:15 a.m. rehearsal <i>I Will Believe</i>	5/3, 5/10, 5/17	11:15 a.m. rehearsal
3/29	11:15 a.m. rehearsal	5/24, 5/31	11:15 a.m. rehearsal
4/5	11:15 a.m. rehearsal (with adults)	6/7	Children’s Sunday - Joyful Noyse Recognition <i>Beach Party - Surfin’ the Scriptures</i>
4/12 (Easter)	No early rehearsal <i>Peace I Leave with You</i> (with adults)		



Project Bread's FoodSource Hotline

1-800-645-8333 TTY: 1-800-377-1292

With the high cost of living in the Commonwealth and more than 522,000 people across the state struggling to put food on the table, chances are that a friend or neighbor of yours is having difficulty making ends meet this winter. Project Bread's FoodSource Hotline can help. The FoodSource Hotline is the only comprehensive information and referral service for the hungry in Massachusetts. Counselors can provide information and screen callers for food stamp eligibility, connect them to school meal programs, and direct them to emergency food resources right in their neighborhood. Counselors can assist callers in 160 languages and the calls are both personalized and confidential. Extend your goodwill and reach out to those in need. A call to Project Bread's FoodSource Hotline may be all it takes to provide comfort to someone who is struggling.

In response to the increased demand for help, Project Bread's Food Source Hotline has extended its hours to:

Monday – Friday: 8:00 A.M. – 7:00 P.M.

Saturday: 10:00 A.M. – 2:00 P.M.



Church Camping Weekend

June 19th - 21st
at Oak Haven in
Wales, MA

We are looking to gauge the level of interest in our annual church camping weekend. (We only had 3 families last year.) We will be going a week earlier than usual due to the 4th of July falling on a Saturday this year. Please let us know as soon as possible if you plan on joining us as I need to contact the campground soon with the number of sites we will need. Please note that once you make the commitment to go, you will be responsible for the payment even if for some reason you are unable to make it.

Thanks for your cooperation,
Lori Stockhaus

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

Phone: (508)832-2845

Web: auburnfirstucc.org



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