



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!’”

Into the Shadows

The season of Lent begins this year on March 9 with Ash Wednesday, and on March 13 with the first Sunday during the Lenten season. The Sundays during Lent are not actually part of Lent itself, since Sunday is always a Feast Day (*the Lord’s Day*), and a *Feast Day* can never be a *Fast Day*. So when we count backwards 40 days from Easter to determine the beginning of Lent, we skip the Sundays in order to arrive at Ash Wednesday and make the calendar turn out right.

Everything about Christian faith is based on the contrast between darkness and light. This contrast often escalates into contradiction. Lent itself is such a contradiction. The name itself comes from the Old English *lenten*, which means *lengthening of days*. It means that Spring is on its way. We all know this as we watch the snow melt and the daylight last longer. But the scriptures for the season and the spiritual practice of the centuries pitch us into *the shadows of human circumstance* at just the same time as we see the shadows of nature being pushed back by the growing sunlight.

All of us *live in the shadows* at some part of our being. The purpose for fasting is to *confront the shadows* by entering into the shadows. The point of fasting is to clear away debris in order to see the Lord more clearly in our lives. To do this requires an adjustment in our customary habit patterns, even if only for a season.

The purpose for fasting is not to lose weight, or detoxify the body, or break bad habits of food and drink - although these might be welcome side benefits. *The purpose for fasting is to draw closer to the Lord*. The objective in fasting is to *refocus our priorities* away from the customary things of this world and toward the mercy of a forgiving and saving God.

The heart of fasting is not denial, but prayer. The goal is *amendment of life*, as classic spiritual language describes it - or, to use an older Benedictine description: *a conversion of manners*. Fasting is essentially *sacramental*: It is an *outward and visible sign of an inward and invisible grace*.

Outward signs are a means to an end, not the end in itself. So you do not increase your holiness by eating fish instead of beef. But if you renounce turnips for Lent, even though you do not like turnips and never eat them, you have missed the point. Those who merely follow the outward rule of fish instead of beef while nothing else really changes also miss the point.

If you seek an effective Lenten season, pray for the Lord to show you *what forms of habit* have a grip on your life so that *they rule over you* instead of you controlling them. Then fast them. *Renounce them* for a season - be they patterns of food and drink, or patterns of spending, speaking, behaving, feeling or thinking.

What you add is just as important as *what you forego*. Make room for a Psalm or a scripture or a time of prayer you previously have not done. But make food a part of your practice because forsaking some food will turn your attention more greatly on the Lord.

At the end of it, you should discover that the Lord has taken up residence at a deeper place in your being than you previously thought possible. Then you will have received *amendment of life*, and a *conversion of manners*.

Coffee Hour Hosts

- Mar. 6/13 Outreach Committee
- Mar. 20 Music Committee
- Mar. 27 Trustees
- Apr. 3 Deacons

**COMMUNITY CORNED BEEF
& CABBAGE SUPPER**

Saturday, March 19th at 5p.m.

Adults - \$10 Children - \$ 5

Servers: B.O.C.E. & Memorial Committee



PEOPLE TO PEOPLE STUDENT AMBASSADOR PROGRAM

Church members, Devon Orcutt and Tori Stockhaus, have been invited to travel to Australia this summer as student delegates with the People to People Student Ambassador Program. Students are nominated for the program by their schools or communities.

Devon will travel with the high school delegation. Tori will travel with the junior high delegation. They will be Youth Ambassadors representing the United States and the Central Massachusetts area. The trip is 20 days and stretches from Cairns to Sydney.

During this time they will have the opportunity to meet with political leaders, aboriginal tribes, swim in the Great Barrier Reef, go to the Sydney Opera House, travel through the rain forest, go to an animal sanctuary, stay on a farm in the Outback, spend time with local families and so much more!

Devon will be eligible to earn college credits upon completion of this trip and additional online study. Tori will receive a certificate which will be included in her transcripts for college entry.

Each of these Youth Ambassadors must now focus on fundraising to participate in this program. The cost to participate is over \$7,300 per person which includes all expenses: airfare, meals, activities, taxes, tips, etc. Won't you please consider helping these young delegates reach their goals? Contribution forms, along with additional information, can be found on the stage in Fellowship Hall, or call the Church office, 508-832-2845 to have a form mailed to you. Thank you for your support.

As many of you know, the church was completely destroyed by fire in 1896. We have therefore started a Fire Alarm fund to save up money to outfit the church with a fire alarm system. We have already received a \$10,000 anonymous donation to start funding this system, and anticipate we will need an additional \$25,000. If you would like to contribute, please write "Fire Alarm" on your donation. Thank you!

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.

JOYFUL NOYSE SCHEDULE

3/6, 3/13, 3/20 ~ 11:15 a.m. rehearsal

3/27 ~ 9:15 a.m. rehearsal





It's official!!! After a successful candidating weekend, it was a unanimous vote to accept Pastor Brian M. Grover as the next pastor of First Congregational Church of Auburn!

Brian will be moving to Auburn with his lovely wife, Jenney, and they have already begun their house hunting process. The Grovers will arrive in late May with Brian's first official day being June 1st and his first Sunday in the pulpit will be June 5th. We are so excited about what God has planned at First Congregational Church of Auburn with our new spiritual leader, Brian.

In His Service,
The Pastoral Search Committee

Library Tidings by Gloria Whitehead

Carolyn Nabors Baker has written books for both adults and children. Her title, *Caught in a Higher Love*, is perfect to describe lessons from the lives of 24 women who had the opportunity to experience a connection to their Lord. Thus its contents is 24 brief chapters such as Eve/Contentment, Naomi/Change, Sarah/A Promise Is a Promise and Sapphina/Hoarding Treasures.

About to choose an illustration, the book opened at random to page 53, Lot's Wife/Looking Back. Remember when Lot's family was fleeing the city of Sodom which was in flames and, upon turning back to look, Lot's wife turned into a pillar of salt? Well, the story is not to tell why she looked back. Rather, while checking the city, men of God found it full of corruption - some of which they were victims themselves. In revenge the assailants were struck blind and then could not find the door handle of the room. That incident sealed the fate of Sodom. In turn, also, these men of God told Lot to flee quickly with his family (Genesis 19:12 & 13). Lot disputed with these men. He trusted his own judgment more than God's. He'd been saved once before. Finally, with intensive persuasion, Lot and his family chose a different escape route, running all day and all night to a small town called Zoar. As dawn arrived the next day, while Lot's wife was second guessing and starting to turn back, God rained sulfur on the city of Sodom and Gomorrah. Somehow all of God's efforts to save Lot's wife were unheard. She was so wrapped up in her world she lost sight of God. She wouldn't let go of it all or recognize that nothing could come close to the glorious love of God.

Could there be a message herein for us?

A new slant to an old request . . . think about it, and you'll come up with several reasons why. The new . . . when you're gifting books to the Adult or Children's Libraries PLEASE include your name. If not, your book(s) will not go into our church libraries. Many thanks to all of you who have met this request for years and continue to do so.

CRADLE ROLL

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| 3/6 Cindy Dube & Julie Cove | 3/13 Diane Moore & Lillian McPherson |
| 3/20 Bessie Morgan & Steven Cariglio | 3/27 Stacy Cove & adult volunteer needed |
| 4/3 Nick Stockhaus & Andrew Gemme | 4/10 Linda Hardy & Tori Stockhaus |

FRIENDLY REMINDER TO ALL PARENTS:
There is no Cradle Roll coverage until 9:45 a.m.



March is National colorectal Cancer Awareness Month, National Nutrition Month, National Endometriosis Awareness Month, Save Your Vision Month, Trisomy Awareness Month, and Workplace Eye Wellness Month. March 6-12 is Patient Safety Awareness Week, March 7-13 is National Sleep Awareness Week, and March 7-12 is National School Breakfast Week. March 10 is National Women and Girl's HIV/AIDS Awareness Day and March 11 is World Kidney Day.

The 14th-20th is Brain Awareness Week, the 20th-26th is National Poison Prevention Week, and the 21st-27th is World Salt Awareness Week. March 24th is World Tuberculosis Day and the 25th is American Diabetes Alert Day.

I will have information available for most of these subjects on the health table. If there is something else you need information on, please ask because I have a file cabinet full. I have quite a bit of information especially on cancer, so even if it's for a friend or neighbor, or how to deal with a friend or neighbor's cancer, please check with me.

The closet on the left as you enter the educational wing, continues to be changing frequently with medical equipment, which is good. Our closet is known to the other churches and the Auburn Nurses, so we get items and we loan items.

I have just gotten a letter from the UCC regarding my position and to get current resources from the office. I will keep you informed and any new information will be on the table in Fellowship Hall. God Bless!

Debbie Pranaitis
Parish Nurse

*Thought for the Day:
The will of God will never
take you where the grace
of God will not keep you.*

The Outreach Committee would like to encourage your support of Overlook Farm's annual Pancake Breakfast.

Heifer International
Overlook Farm
216 Wachusett
Street,
Rutland, MA
508-886-2221



Pancake Breakfast

PANCAKES AT THE FARM

MARCH 12TH & 13TH

9:00 A.M. TO 1:00 P.M.

Tour the farm, visit the sugar shack and enjoy a hearty pancake breakfast with maple syrup and pork sausage. Reservations are required.
Call 508-886-5002.

Happy Birthday to:

MacKenzie Lillian Young - 3/16
Barbara Niles - 3/20
Jean McPherson - 3/26



Happy Birthday!

Here We Grow Preschool



Happenings during the month of February: During the entire month of February we ran our second fundraiser of Hebert Candy Bars (which ended up being our first because of the problems with Yankee Candle). If we sell all the candy bars, or eat them ourselves, HWG's profit could be just under \$5,000.00. All fundraising money goes back to the children who are attending HWG this school year.

The children and staff celebrated Valentines Day with parties on the 10th & 11th. The children all had the opportunity to be mail carriers during circle time. They had a great time. The parents provided snack which consisted of cookies or rice krispie squares, ice cream and juice.

We have had many new visitors come to *Here We Grow* to check us out for next year. Did you know that most families come to HWG because a friend, neighbor or relative has recommended us? That is our best form of advertising. Our Open House is scheduled for March 9th at 1:00-2:30 in the afternoon. We have spots available in the 2-day pm session and just a few 4 year old spots available. We are hoping for the remainder spots to fill up within the next few months. If you know of anyone looking for a preschool for their child, please send them our way. Many of the visitors remarked on 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 four year old children will be fingerprinted by some of our dads who are police officers. All information will be sent home to the parents.

On a sad note, Anne Coyne's son, Stephen, passed away on February 12th while attending Keene State. Our thoughts, prayers and support are with Anne and her family.

We have a new staff person who joined us the first week of March. Her name is Patty Bickford and she will be working 3 days a week in room 2. Mrs. Gina Murphy, unfortunately, had to leave us and accept a job with benefits and one that is open all year long. We will miss her and wish her the best of luck. Until next month, stay healthy and safe.

Dawn Murphy
Here We Grow Director

Please join us for *Here We Grow's* Open House
Wednesday, March 9th from 1:00 P.M. to 2:30 P.M.

On January 31st we celebrated the baptism of Caitlin Rose Harrington. Caitlin is the 11 month old daughter of Mark and Jessica Harrington. We pray God's blessing upon Caitlin and her family.



March 2011

Welcome Spring! Well, at least later this month spring will come and welcome up all the buds quietly nestled in the ground. I pray that you will also welcome the upcoming Lenten season with as much eager anticipation as you do the warm weather and budding flowers. Let us renew and warm our hearts as our Father shows us the beauty in the world and in His Word.

Last month Jen Bohn, Mike Schillinger and I along with 7 teens spent a weekend up at **Camp Berea** on Newfound Lake in New Hampshire. We had a wonderful weekend led by Nate Parks and the band Circle Slide. The theme of the weekend was, "We love Him because He first loved us!" The kids were able to meet with other Christian teens and openly celebrate our love for God and each other. We also had some intense games of volleyball and paintball. I am sure we will be making plans again next year. We are also working with Camp Berea to participate in a weekend long mission trip to help with the upkeep of the camp. We will need adult help with this and everyone is invited to participate. They especially need skilled labor. We, as a Church, have sent many youth to this camp and many have accepted Jesus as their Savior during this time. I would like to invite all of you, especially the parents of past participants, to sign up. I will be getting more information soon and will keep you posted.



On March 5th, **the Confirmation Class** will be attending Super Saturday in Ludlow, MA and along with other UCC youth groups across the state will be making school kits to distribute to impoverished schools & refugee camps through Church World Service. Any school supplies you are willing to contribute will be appreciated. I have a list and box in the back of fellowship hall. Basically pencils, 70 count notebooks, rulers, pencil sharpeners and cloth bags, NOT the recyclable ones. Thank you to everyone who contributed and participated in the bake sale. It was a huge success. We will also be having a candy sale for Mother's Day.

Youth on a Mission will be selling "Ever So Humble Pies" on March 20th and 27th for a delivery on Palm Sunday. These pies have been a hit in the past, so you don't want to miss out! Thank you for your continued support of our youth group.

Once again we will be assisting with the **Special Olympics** held at Auburn High School. This is open to all. We are planning to help on March 12th from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m., but you can sign-up for the time slot that works for you. Please let me know A.S.A.P. if you're interested so we can submit our name as a group.

The Board of Ed. and I are working on a **Sunday breakfast** possibly on Palm Sunday. Last year we were pleasantly surprised by the crowd. This year, however, we are trying to have a little more control on the numbers so we will be ready with enough food. I am also planning the annual Easter Egg Hunt and craft afternoon for Palm Sunday. I will be having sign up sheets on the Sunday School bulletin board soon.

May you all have a blessed month and enjoy the sunshine.

With His guidance we serve,

Jean McPherson, Director of Religious Education



The Spirit Suppers are held on the third Wednesday of the month. Remember, this is a casual, potluck supper designed to allow an informal setting for fellowship with our church family. **ALL ARE WELCOME.** **The next supper will be held on Wednesday, March 16th at 6 p.m. We hope you can join us!**



Please keep the following families in your thoughts and prayers.

A memorial service was held in our Church on Saturday, January 22, 2011 in remembrance of Glen D. Prouty, 46, of Key Largo, Florida who died on December 29, 2010 as a result of a motor vehicle accident. Glen graduated from Auburn High School and Sylvania Tech and later moved to Key Largo where he was a commercial lobsterman. He was preceded in death by his father, Malcolm Prouty. He is survived by his daughter, Eva, his mother, Karen Prouty, his 2 brothers, Joel and Mark Prouty and his sister, Jane Prouty Polston, and his grandmother, Eleanor Blomstrom.

Warren V. Prescott, 93, died January 23, 2011. Warren was the son of George W. and Mary O. Prescott. He was predeceased by his wife of 67 years, Helen, and his sisters, Rose Milliken and Mary Holstrom. He leaves his 2 daughters, Nan Johnson and her husband, Wilbur, and Bette Clark and her husband, Robert, and 3 grandchildren, Michelle Wallace, Wendy Byrne and her husband, Ed, and Scott Johnson and his wife, Nicole. Warren is also survived by 4 great-grandchildren. Warren was a graduate of Auburn High School. He retired from Morgan Construction Company after 30 years working as an inspector and superintendent overseeing construction sites in England, Japan, South Africa and Brazil. A funeral service was held at Britton-Wallace Funeral Home on January 31st.

Sally T. Watson, 64, of Auburn died February 13th, 2011. She was the daughter of the late Harvey and Marion Israelian. She leaves her husband of 41 years, John Watson, her 2 children, Matthew Watson and his wife Sherri-Ann, and Jodi Towne and her husband Chris. Sally is survived by 3 sisters, Natalie Berthiaume, Cheryl Ducharme and Marilyn Israelian-England, and a brother, Harvey Israelian. She also leaves 3 grandchildren and several nieces and nephews. Sally graduated from Auburn High School and earned her Surgical Technician Degree at David Hale Fanning Trade School in Worcester. She worked for Fairlawn Hospital and oral surgeons, Drs. Kelly and Iacovele.

Upon raising her family, Sally returned to work at Bancroft Human Services and Auburn Auto Parts.

A funeral service was held here at our Church on February 18th.

Kenneth A. Bardsley of Auburn passed away on February 14, 2011. He was the son of Elsie and Frederick Bardsley. He leaves his daughters, June Johannesen and Jennifer Bardsley and 3 grandsons. He leaves his brother, Bruce Bardsley and several nieces and nephews, and his long-time companion, Dorothy Carney of Sturbridge. His brother, Carroll Bardsley, predeceased him. He worked for the family owned lumber company in Auburn and as a salesperson for Duo-Fast Northeast. He was a Staff Sergeant in the U.S. Air Force during the Korean War. He was a 32 degree Mason, and a member of the Joel H. Prouty Lodge in Auburn, the Scottish Rite Bodies and he was a Shriner and a member of the Auburn Elks. His funeral was held here at our church on February 17th.

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

One Great Hour of Sharing — OGHS

One Great Hour of Sharing is administered by the Wider Church Ministries of the United Church of Christ and provides support to people in over 80 countries. When you make a gift to the offering you become a partner in the refuge, disaster relief, and community development efforts of the UCC in the United States and internationally. Through this refugee, relief, and development fund lives are changed. Sharing brings Joy! You'll find offering envelopes enclosed in this month's *Tidings*. Please drop in the offering plate on Sunday or mail to: FCC, 128 Central St., Auburn, MA 01501. Thank you!

EMERITUS SUNDAY

Mark your calendars for Sunday, March 27th, as Rev. Ken Knox returns to the pulpit for Emeritus Sunday.



Easter Plant Order Form

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 also decorating our Church Sanctuary. 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 Sunday, Apr. 17th.**

- Lilies (1 stem) \$10.00** _____
- Lilies (2 stems) \$15.00** _____
- Tulips 8" pot (11 bulbs) \$10.00** _____
- Tulips large pot (22 bulbs) \$16.00** _____

Color Choice: Yellow _____ Pink _____
 Red _____ Orange _____

Hyacinth (6 bulbs) \$10.00 _____

Color Choice: Blue _____ White _____

Dedication: (PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY)

In Memory of _____

In Celebration of/for _____

Name: _____

Phone: _____

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.

TIDINGS is a monthly publication of

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

Phone: (508) 832-2845

Office Hours: Mon.-Fri. 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Pastor's Office Day: Thursday

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

Web: auburnfirstucc.org



**BULK RATE
 U.S. POSTAGE
 PAID
 Non-Profit Org.
 Permit No. 6
 Auburn, Mass**

March 2011						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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13	14	15	16	17	18	19
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27	28	29	30	31		