#### FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH



is
March 18th
5 PM
Corned Beef
\$10/\$5

1 cross + 3 nails = 4 given.

Coffee Hour Hosts

March 5 ~ Stewardship

March 12 & 19 ~ Outreach

March 26 ~ Music

April 2 & 9 ~ Trustees

### 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!'"

Lent is upon us. Lent was established by the church to allow time for Christians to prepare themselves to celebrate Easter, the holiest day of our church year. In our present society, Easter preparation consists of having plenty of candy and food for family gatherings. Plus, Mardi Gras is a feast that preceded the fasting of Lent with a greater emphasis on the partying and on overlooking the feast.

Lent is a good time to set our spiritual houses in order- a time to do those religious things we have intended to do but never quite did. Grace at meals, Bible study, church attendance, religious reading are all Lenten possibilities.

First Congregational will have the usual services of Lent; Ash Wednesday March 1 at 7 pm. Palm Sunday April 9, Maundy Thursday April 13, Easter sunrise and worship on April 16. There will be Bible study on Thursdays in March: the 9th, 16th, 23rd and 30th; Bible 101, Getting acquainted with your Bible.

If your New Year's resolutions aren't doing so well, try a Lenten discipline for 40 days. We wish you well and will be here to share your experience.

God Bless, Rev. Dr. Kenneth E Knox Pastor



Heifer International's Overlook Farm 216 Wachusett St. Rutland, MA 01543 Pancakes at the Farm

Come and observe the Maple Sugaring operation, visit the farm animals, learn about the work of Heifer International and enjoy a hearty pancake feed with maple syrup and Overlook Farm's own sausage.

Saturdays, March 4, 11, 18 and 25 9:00 am to 1:00 pm

Adults \$5 Children 3-10 \$3 and under 3 are free
Reservations required
Call 508-886-2221

#### **Minister of Christian Education**

Often we think of God as being only concerned with the "big things" in life. We know he cares for us in all things, yet we still keep the little details or trivial matters to ourselves. Thus we bear burdens and hurts that we do not have to bear. Archaeology, specifically those digs in Israel, has led to some very great discoveries and some wonderful small ones as well. One small find was the discovery of an ancient road some twelve feet below the ground level of Jerusalem today. Part of that road extends into what is now the basement of a convent. Etched into the road are lines, markings, and symbols that reveal that this was once a place where children played. Using old documents and the layout of the etchings, scholars believe there was a game somewhat similar to hopscotch, which was called "King". That is not a really big discovery except when one realizes that it was along that stretch of pavement that Jesus was led out from Pilate to be crucified. On the way a crown of thorns was placed on his head, a reed put in his hand, a cloak of purple was put on him and all mocked him while feigning respect and saying "Hail, King of the Jews" (Mark 15:16-20).

A child's game of fun was used to further humiliate Jesus as he approached his own death. Being mocked, "made fun of", or being the butt of jokes hurts. We have all felt that hurt and often we can just cast it off, but sometimes that hurt goes deep and we can't seem to shake it. Because it seems like a trivial thing, it makes us feel even worse. We forget that "He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows." (Isaiah 53:4). We worship a God of details who is compassionate and cares, who hurts with us so that we never need to think of anything as "too small" to take to him in prayer. This Lenten season, I would encourage you to take everything to God in prayer, no matter how big or small it might seem, he wants to be part of all of our lives, not just the "big things". Also take time to think about any times you may have hurt someone by mocking or making fun of them and ask for forgiveness from but the person you hurt and from God.

#### Reminders:

There will be a meeting for all youth in grades 6-8 (and their parents) on Sunday, March 5<sup>th</sup>, to discuss the formation of a youth group for that age group. Please bring you calendar and your ideas!

We will be having Opening Worship Time every Sunday (except the fourth Sunday when we go to church) at 10:00 in the Vestry. Please plan for your children to arrive in the vestry between 9:45 and 10:00. The Library committee will have the library open and staffed by 9:30 for children who need to arrive earlier than 9:45a.m.

There will be a Sunday School teachers meeting on Sunday, March  $26^{th}$  at 9:30 a.m.

~ Barbara Jernigan

Our very deepest sympathies to Carol Mangiacotti on the loss of her son James M. "Jay" Stacy who passed away on Friday, February 10 after an accident. Please keep the family and friends in your prayers as they mourn his loss. Contributions can be made to Alyssa Marie Belton Scholarship Fund, c/o I.C. Credit Union, 400 Mechanic Street, Leominster, MA 01453.

Also to Kurt Blomstrom on the passing of his father, Alden A. Blomstrom who died on January 29 after a short illness. Kurt is our back up organist and does some of our funerals and other services.



#### Library Tidings for March 2006 By Gloria Whitehead

Have you decided how you will acknowledge Lent and its significant 40 days? Giving up a negative habit or establishing a routine that is beneficial to one's health is still a popular discipline. However, did you happen to read the editor's introduction on page 4 in the current March-April Upper Room booklet? It's last two sentences hold a great idea.

If that's not your cup of tea, there are so many inspirational books (#10) in the church library, you're certain to find one that motivates you in some special way. Maybe one those listed below will appeal to you, eliminating a further search. All are on the library table. Whatever you do, try to make Lent a little more powerful this year.

#### #10 In Search of Morality by Robert A Schuller

Our country's morals seem to be going downhill rapidly, our honored institutions seem to be crumbling before our eyes along with rising crime, mistrust of media, disillusionment with politics and prejudice. In spite of so much unrest, you can have a fulfilling life today and into the future because morality comes from the inside out. It all begins with you.

#### #10 Whole Prayer by Walter Wangerin Jr.

If you long for a deeper relationship with God, for a broader exposure to the dynamics of prayer—of speaking, listening and of "hearing" God, this book is a trustworthy guide.

#### #10 God Came Near by Max Lucado

How clearly do you see Christ? Do you picture a wavy figure in a desert mirage or the solid shoulder of a best friend? Do you depend on others to lead you or do you actively seek his face? Does he seem far away or amazingly, wonderfully near?

#### #I The Sins of Herod by Frank G. Slaughter

A novel - the 50th published in 1968 for this re-known author who, at 17 was Phi Beta Kappa and, at 22, had graduated from John Hopkins Medical School and was commanding an army hospital ship in the Pacific in W.W. II.

This is a dramatic novel of the crucifixion and the early years of Christianity—set against the brilliant barbaric panorama of the ancient Middle Eastern World.

A pre-thanks for checking to see if you have any adult or children's books that you've meant to return to the church libraries. Quite a few are out. Also, if you find some books without a number on the back, they're new books which Dottie hasn't been able to catalog yet. However, there's a number on the upper left hand corner of the sign-out card and, if interested, you can check it with the category listing card under the glass on top of the chest in the Adult Library.

P.S. The two lines in the Upper Room read: "This year I pray for the grace and the humility to be Christ's presence to others. Easter promises not only the gift of Christ's presence to us but the privilege of being Christ's presence for those in need of a helping hand."

Stewardship It's Heart Work.

Our theme for 2006 is Stewardship: It's Heart Work.

As we learned over the past year...Stewardship is about Prayer, Time, Talents and Treasures. We give of ourselves in each of these areas as we can. To take it a step further, the true meaning of stewardship is that it is "heart work".

Jesus said, "the wind blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes." Our Lord was comparing the wind

to the workings of God's spirit within your life.

This marks the beginning of our annual appeal for tithes and offerings to sustain and support God's work throughout our Church. It is a special time to let the workings of God's spirit open your heart to the needs of our Church. Without a doubt, that's what Jesus meant when He said, "Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." Generous gifts spring from a caring heart caused by the working of God's spirit within your life.

Will you allow God's spirit to work within your life and to open your heart concerning a generous gift?

Our Committee hopes that each of you finds *Stewardship* a valuable addition to the monthly Tidings mailing. We welcome any comments and/or thoughts you might have regarding this publication or about Stewardship in general. Please feel free to speak with any one of us or send your comments via email to <u>Stewardship@AuburnFirstUCC.org</u>. We look forward to hearing from you.

In His Love, *The Stewardship Committee*John Rockwood (Chair), Michael & Michele Schillinger, Al Boucher, Todd & Donna Dube

#### **CERTIFIED BABYSITTING COURSE**

When: Tues. April 18 & Wed. April 19, 2006 10:00 a.m.- 2:30 p.m. with 1/2 hour lunch

Where: First Congregational Church 128 Central St. Auburn MA

Who: Taught by Pam Daigneault from U-Mass Memorial Family Education Department.

Open to 11yr. olds and up. It is limited to 20 students. Cost is \$40.00 due on the first day of class. Students must bring a doll or teddy bear to practice with. Also, bring a lunch. Please call Pam at U-Mass to reserve your spot. If she's not in her office, please leave a message and she will get back to you. This class was a success over the December vacation so please call soon. 508-334-6485.



March 20, 2006

March is National Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month, National Kidney Month, National Eye Donor Month, and National Nutrition Month.

March 28th is American Diabetes Alert Day.

These are reminders for screenings, filling out organ donor cards, and good nutrition. There was a "Healthy Living" program at First Congrega-

tional Church in October 2005. Some great books about diet and nutrition were borrowed from the Auburn Public Library. They had beautiful pictures and many were easy to read. There were pictures of two different choices: one from a fast food place and the other an easy to prepare at home meal, and then the calories in each. It's no wonder there is an obesity epidemic in this country!

Also, this past Sunday, in the PARADE section of the Sunday newspaper, there was an article about Acetaminophen (Tylenol). It is a safe and effective pain medication. You should never have more than 4,000 mg. a day-eight 500 mg. extra-strength capsules. Several other medications also contain acetaminophen (for example, Nyquil Cold/Flu, Sudafed, Alka-Seltzer Plus, Sinutab, Contac, and Actifed.) Please be aware!

The babysitting course held in December was a success. I am sponsoring another session during April school vacation, April 18&19, 2006. They are 10:00am-2:30pm with 1/2 hour lunch. Cost is \$40.00 and payable the first day of class. Call Pam Daigneault at U-Mass/Memorial Health Care 508-334-6485. She only accepts 20 in a class so call and reserve your space. This is open to students 11 years and up. When the class is over the student will have a certificate. They learn basic first aid, CPR for an infant and child, ways to entertain a child, SAFETY issues while babysitting, and more.

I have a nurse working with me for a few months. Her name is Sue Vail. She's a visiting nurse with the Auburn District Nurses. She's working on her Master's Degree and has this as part of her studies. She and I are hoping to do a presentation on health issues. If there is anything special you'd like to hear about, please let me know. Sue would like to be the Parish Nurse at St. Joseph's in Charlton.

Please help me to update the church's certified CPR list that we post throughout the building. Please let me know if you are willing to have your name on this list.

Have a safe and happy March. God Bless!

Debbie Pranaitis

<u>Saturday April 15 - Scholarship Applications Due</u> - Applications are now available in Fellowship Hall and in the church office for anyone interested in applying for a scholarship.

The Auburn Cultural Council is looking for new members to help plan trips and allocate state arts lottery funds for local programs. The commitment needed is a small one and all Auburn residents are welcomed. Call Roberta Stencel at 508-832-4954 with any questions.

Some nice volunteers cleaned out the kitchen a while back and we are looking to have some **miscellaneous dishes** picked up by their owners. They are in Fellowship Hall.

#### From: The Choir

Recently I sent out a mailing to the choir (response optional and anonymous) and posed these questions:

Why do you sing in the choir?
What does it mean to you?
Is it important in your personal life?
religious life?

What do you think the role of the choir is during worship?

The responses I received were enlightening. I enjoyed reading them tremendously and was getting interested in this 'window' of insight.

Of those who participated, the responses ran the gamut from a few concise sentences to several typed pages. Nearly every single person answered the first question with "I love to sing." A couple of people said they were being 'selfish' as they received back as much as they gave.

All in all, it was clear this is a serious commitment for most members. Their love of singing and passion for music as a path to their faith came through in every single instance.

Let's let the choir speak for themselves:

"I believe that music is an integral part of the church service and it helps me express my faith in God. God tells us to use our talents and I hope the music we make is pleasing to Him."

"Singing expresses how I feel. It pulls me to church and makes me active. It is also an important role model for the youth."

"I am a firm believer in giving of your time, talent, and treasure to serve God and the church. Singing in the choir offers me the opportunity to so this. Singing is a way of praying and reading scripture. I have learned more passages from the Bible singing in choir then I did in 12 years of Sunday School!"

"Singing in the choir lifts my spirits and I truly believe it is the best way for me to express my faith and gratitude to God. Music affects me emotionally as well; it is a gift. If one person in the congregation is uplifted by our musical message, that's one person who may have a better day or week. I don't need to shout my Christianity from the rooftops or convince others to follow my path. Religion is a private personal thing. I know that the people I am singing with join together and become one voice for the glory of God."

"Singing makes me feel good about contributing to the service. People enjoy the music, making me feel I'm singing to each and every one."

"Being in the choir is the most comfortable place for me during worship. It is how I choose to worship God and connect with the message being given during the service. Singing is praying twice!"

"Singing gives me a much better understanding of the church service through music. I went through some tough times. I really listened to the music, thought about the meaning of the words and it gave me a sense of peace."

"It gives me great joy singing scriptures and stories of Jesus Christ. What better way to spread God's word than through music."

And lastly, one very succinct response to the question ~ 'Why do you sing in the choir?' "Because my wife makes me!"

Many members indicated choir is important in their personal life, summed up well here: "Singing in the choir is important to my personal life because my fellow choir members are my friends and singing is an experience we can share together, being supportive and having an enjoyable time."

"I have made many friends and met many people through the choir."

Still others wrote how continuing to learn was important to them:

"I have learned so much musically by singing in the choir and feel I've become a better singer."

"I have been in the choir for about 12 years and much of what I know has been learned since you joined us, Heather. Your love for music and your ability to convey that has been so important and has enriched my experiences more than you can know."

"For me the choir continues to be a rewarding experience due in large part to an excellent leader who is sensitive to the needs of all choir members and treats us all equally, recognizing that we all give some gift even if our talents differ."

#### (Thanks guys!!)

Lastly, to the question of the choir's role during worship service:

"Music is an important ministry in the church. I believe the choir leads the congregation in setting the mood and aiding in the worship service. So many beautiful thoughts and expressions are provided through song. The choir can convey the meaning of the season as well as re-emphasize the theme of the day. How often have we scheduled an anthem that coincided precisely with the sermon! (Divine intervention?!) Singing in the church choir is to glorify God; what we're all here to try to do."

"The role of choir is to work with the minister to enhance the format and ceremony of worship. We also support and lead the congregation in hymns and responses."

"People enjoy the music and listen to the message we are telling them."

"A lot of people come up to me and say how much the music means to them and how much it moves them."

"We are messengers and sometimes leaders."

"We are there to be musical leaders for the congregation. Our music is a teaching tool as well, helping us to learn passages from the Bible through music. I also believe we set the tone for the service with our music."

"The role of the choir is to express worship, prayer, scripture, praise and spiritual message through music. We help the congregation (and ourselves) receive his message. Some people get more out of the anthems messages then they do the sermon. We are ministers of music indeed."

Blessings, Heather Moore Minister of Music

"God gave us music that we might pray without words."

#### Joyful Noyse Choir Member of the Month: Lillian McPherson

Lillian is 10 years old and is in the fourth grade at Julia Bancroft School. She has been singing with Joyful Noyse for 5 years.

Lillian plays in the recorder group at her school and is part of the Music Drama Group.

She also participated in the 'Go Fish' production with Pakachoag.

She has this to say about singing:

"I like to learn new words to songs" and (music)
"makes me happy."

It was discussed at our monthly meeting that we are hoping to have a trumpet player for Easter. If anyone knows of a good piano that they would like to give to the church, the choir room is in need of a new one. The last time the piano was tuned, Heather was told it wouldn't be able to be done again because it's been tuned too many times and it's too old.

This year at the Summer Solstice there will also be a yard sale and it will be run my Linda & Debbie Mahlert & JoAnn DeRose from the Music Committee along with help from Breyn Brothers.

~The Music Committee

Joyful Noyse Schedule

Joyful Noyse Schedule

March

5, 12,19 II AM

26 9:15 AM

1 Have Come Down to the Lakeshore'

1 'Ask and Seek and Knock'

#### Yard Sale News

After the February 4th Summer Solstice meeting several of us stayed to organize and clean-up behind the curtains on the stage. If anyone has anything to donate they can leave it there. Please make sure the items are clean and in working order. Also it would be helpful if a piece of masking tape is on each item. No computer monitors or t.v.'s as if they aren't sold, the church would have to pay to discard them

If anyone is interested in helping us with pricing or with the yard sale, please let us know. We will probably start pricing in March, as people have been moving and we are starting to collect items.

Any questions contact:

**Debbie Mahlert 508-832-3348** 

Linda Mahlert 508-764-2570

**Breyn Brothers 508-832-7376** 

#### **HERE WE GROW PRESCHOOL**

I think I smell spring. We all feel blessed with the fact that this winter hasn't been too bad. Now we just wait patiently for the warm weather to stay. I think back to the week before school vacation when on Monday we had a two hour delay because of the snow storm we had on Sunday, but by Wednesday we were out taking walks with the children and enjoying the beautiful blue sky, and some people say a woman can't make up her mind.

On February 8, 2006, Here We Grow hosted its Open House. We had a great turn out of very interested parents and little ones. Half were parents who had already visited and just wanted to take another look, and the other half where new parents who came to really check us out. I am proud to say that ALL were very impressed. At this time we have only two spots in the AM 3's and 2 spots in the PM 3's available. All 4-year-old classes are full with wait lists.

With the month of March here, we settle in for the longest month of the school year. We hope to have the Bish Foundation or the Auburn Police Department in to fingerprint the children. Our photographer, Neal Primeaux will be here the second week of March to take individual and group pictures of the children. The entire month is "Parent Volunteer Month". We hope to see many of the parents take some time to spend a day with us or maybe do a science experiment with their child's class. Whatever they choose to do, we look forward to their visit.

Looking toward the end of the year, we are still open for any ideas on GREAT field trips for 3 and 4 year olds. If you have any suggestions, please give me a call.

Before closing, the staff, the parents, and the children would like to THANK Craig Premo for the super job he is doing as church sexton. Everything is clutter free and clean. KUDOS to Craig. Until next month, be safe and healthy and think SPRING.

Dawn Murphy, Director, Here We Grow Preschool

2/21/06

## *Thank* you! Thank you! Thank *you!*

The Board of Trustees is happy to announce that the entire Roof Loan has been repaid! Thank you to everyone who has contributed over the last two years. We should all take pride in the fact that we were able to raise the funds for this huge project in such a short period of time. Now that the roof has been repaired, we have established a Sanctuary Fund to put aside money to perform some needed repairs in the Sanctuary. Please see a Trustee for more details. Again, thank you for your tremendous support!

Dear Reverend Knox,

Please accept our donation to the New Roof Fund in memory of our beloved "Gram and Gramp Prouty" (Albert & Bernice). Best wishes and good luck with the new roof!

God Bless, Mary Ann and Cric Prouty

#### From the Church Secretary

As many of you may already know, my dog and I had an altercation recently which resulted in around 40 stitches to my mouth and nose. It was mentioned in church on the Sunday after it happened and everyone there that day signed a huge card that Beth Clark made. Debbie, our Parish Nurse, brought me the card after church and after a few tries, where the print got blurry, I was able to read your kind and thoughtful notes of encouragement, love and sympathy. The next week was a week of healing and trying to figure out how to eat and drink without dribbling. Debbie brought me some baby spoons and I got a lot of use from my blender. My girls, age 15 and 13, took turns waking me up every time I fell asleep to see if I needed anything and to make sure I was all right. Dawn stopped by on Monday with flowers from the altar that Charlotte sent along for me and some magazines. The magazines brought immediate relief as the kids went to read them in their rooms.

The follow-up appointment to remove the stitches in my nose came all too soon. I thanked the doctor for his skills in putting my bottom lip back where it belonged. I told him I was glad he had done it. He told me that he was going to send a resident to do it, but the doctor in the emergency room told him that he needed to do it himself. She had been mauled by a dog and her face was scarred from it and she wanted me to have a better chance of healing correctly. I feel that she was meant to be on duty that day.

Those who saw me after a week, couldn't believe how well I was healing. I told them that with so many people praying for a speedy recovery that I couldn't help but heal quickly. My mother had me on a prayer chain in three states, plus all of my church family. I am sure that the Lord put a rush on things just to get peace and quiet in heaven again.

We had to put the dog down which was very sad for me as he was my baby in many ways. He slept in my bed and talked to me with his paws—and I understood what he wanted through years of working out a language of our own. We walked several times a day and played all the time. Whatever room I was in, he was with me. Laying at my feet—loyal and trusting that I wouldn't step on him. We would joke that he was more cat like then dog like. We don't know what made that day different, but we could not let it happen to anyone else. In a blink, he had bitten me savagely four times. Twice on my face, on both hands and once on my shoulder. In an instant life changed.

I was hurt, shocked at what the dog had done and yet, at the same time, I was grateful it was me and not one of my family. I prayed for strength and quickly put it in God's capable hands. The ambulance came in just a couple of minutes. My husband walked in the door right before the ambulance. The doctor got me the best care available, and we were out of the hospital in less then three hours. Now if that wasn't a miracle, I don't know what is.

In an instant, life can change. In an instant. A friend of mine lost her son that week. In an instant, life changed. While shopping this weekend, I heard a man say to a cashier, "My son died last week and I found this new and unopened CD in his car, can I get a refund." In an instant, his life had changed. Life is what we make it. It is filled with good times and bad times. It can change in an instant. When it does, do you tell a friend, or call a relative? Talk to God, He can help. He can ease your sadness, he can help you heal. A church family is a powerful way for God to show you love. They rally when you're down and encourage you in all aspects of life. If you don't already belong to this family, I think you should join.

I thank you for your kind words and your caring way. I knew I wasn't alone. I knew you would all be with me. It helped in so many ways. Thank You! ~ Tammy



A new photography book, and a unique part of Auburn history, For the Brotherhood—The Auburn Fire Department, by Kimberly C. Tentor will be available in early May 2006. Kimberly has been riding with the department and photographing the firefighters for approximately ten months. This book, her Senior Project at

Clark University, is the culmination of many hours spent watching how the fire department and firefighting professionals work.

Kimberly has taken over 2,100 photographs in these months. The book portrays her favorites and tries to capture the essence of the department and the men and women themselves.

There will be a limited number of books available for sale. Each hard cover book will cost \$45. Kimberly will donate \$5 to the Roof Fund for each book sold through First Congregational Church.

Order forms are available in Fellowship Hall or you can contact Kimberly directly at 508-479-4119. She would be happy to answer any questions you may have or mail you an order form. Thank you in advance for your support of this project!

Russell Romkey and his family would like to thank everyone for their kind words and cards after Russell fell last month. He is doing well and when I spoke with the family he was due home and may be home by the time this publication goes out. The cards really helped raise Russell's spirit. Thank you.

> Our annual auction has been changed to a SATURDAY NIGHT March 25th. The evening will begin with a preview of auction items and a baked ziti & meatball dinner at 5:00pm. The LIVE bidding, with our returning auctioneer Tate Conkey, begins at 6:00 sharp. This auction is a lot of fun and our biggest fundraiser

for our summer mission trip. Please mark your calendars and plan to attend. Once again we will be combining our efforts with the senior youth group of Sutton First Congregational church. This

worked out really well for us last year and brought in a wider variety of auction items and bidders.

#### **Surgery**

An older gentleman was on the operating table awaiting surgery and he insisted that his son, a renowned surgeon, perform the operation. As he was about to get the anesthesia he asked to speak to his son. "Yes, Dad, what is it?" "Don't be nervous, son; do your best and just remember, if it doesn't go well, if something happens to me ... your mother is going to come and live with you and your wife...."



giving up cake, and I'm giving up squash."

# Lenten Schedule



March I, 2006 ~ 7 P.M.

Palm Sunday is April 9 ~ 10 am Worship Service

Maundy Thursday is April 13 ~ 7 pm Service

**Good Friday** is April 14 ~ First Congregational Church will have the Sanctuary opened from 1-3 pm for meditation

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

**Easter Sunday** is April 16—with a Sunrise Service, a 9:00 am Service and a 10:30 am Service

Easter

TIDINGS is a monthly publication of

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

Phone: (508)832-2845 Fax: (508)721-2539 Web: auburnfirstucc.org





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