Herald of Good TIDINGS

First Congregational Church of Auburn MA
128 Central Street, Auburn MA 01501
Sunday Service begins at 10 a.m.

Spring, by Mary Oliver

Somewhere a black bear
has just risen from sleep
and is staring down the mountain.

All night in the brisk and shallow restlessness of early spring, I think of her; her four black fists flicking the gravel, her tongue like a red fire touching the grass, the cold water.

There is only one question:
How to love this world.

I think of her rising like a black and leafy ledge to Sharpen her claws against the silence of the trees.

Whatever else my life is with its poems and its music, and its glass cities; it is also this dazzling darkness coming down the mountain, breathing and tasting all day. I think of her – her white teeth, her wordlessness, her perfect love.

Dear church family,

Spring has woken up, and with it, colors and blooms, creatures and new life, the post-Easter resurrection that we had been waiting for has arrived at last. And what is blossoming within you? Yesterday afternoon, I visited Ferjulian's Farm Stand in Hudson, featuring acres of blossoming tulips this time of year. With our little baskets, my friend and I rode the tractor out into the fields, released into a colorful field of tulips. We were instructed on how to best pick them, hold close to the dirt and give a tug until there is a satisfying "pop" sound. And was it ever satisfying, as I collected my blooms, but it hardly seemed right to remove them from these brilliant acres, and the happy people who were simply enjoying being there.

Our church certainly is coming into full bloom, with a great energy and events, wiggly babies and a Bible study with conversations that keep swirling with spirit. As I write, I am preparing (at last!) to map out our pastoral training calendar so we can fully launch our team of caregivers soon and provide more home visits and love for our community. There is a plethora of ideas about our 250th birthday: a party with our time capsule extracted for viewing, artifacts on display, a re-enactment of the original reading of the Declaration of Independence in colonial garb. We are going to bring out the giant movie screen for our front lawn and show a family-friendly movie, plus consider some great food options, games and more.

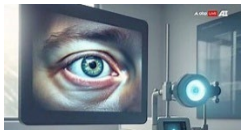
This all couples nicely with the post-Easter themes – finding the living Christ among us. How do we celebrate the joy and love in our midst, and more than that, grow it and allow it to shine? Our work now is to truly live with the Christian promise, the love that endures after death and the devotion to further a legacy gifted to us from centuries before; we are Christians always on the move as we create our heaven on earth not just for us now, but for the next generations. I am enjoying the artifacts from the History Room that appear on my desk, learning about the church that shaped who we are now, and eager for us to contribute in our own way to the next generations.

Yours in the spirit of the living, blooming Christ, Pastor Julie

May is National Alzheimer's and Brain Awareness Month

National PTSD Awareness Month

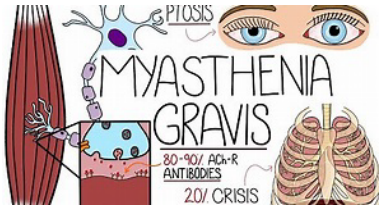
Migraine and Headache Awareness Month



Aphasia Awareness Month

Cataract Awareness Month

Myasthenia Gravis Awareness Month



National Scleroderma (sklair-oh-dur-muh) Awareness Month

Scoliosis Awareness Month.

Deb Pranaitis

It is also time to be aware of Ticks!!!! An Information sheet about LYME DISEASE PROPHYLAXIS after tick bite will be on the table in Fellowship Hall/

To provide effective prophylaxis for Lyme disease, follow these guidelines for doxycycline dosing:

- *Administer doxycycline within 72 hours of tick removal.*
- *Use a dose of 200 mg taken as a single oral dose.*
- *Ensure the patient is at least 8 years old and not pregnant.*
- *Confirm the tick is an Ixodes scapularis (black-legged tick).*
- *Assess the risk of Lyme disease based on the tick's attachment duration (≥36 hours).*
- *Monitor for any adverse reactions to doxycycline post-administration.*

This information is from the CDC Center for Disease Control and Prevention.

Ticks - Center for Disease Control and Prevention

Have a safe and Healthy Month.

Happy Mother's Day to all Mothers.

God Bless, Debbie Pranaitis, Parish Nurse

MVR 2026 Spring Concert Series

Join the Merrimack Valley Ringers for our Spring 2026 program entitled "*Let Freedom Ring! Celebrating 250 Years of our Nation*" This program brings together a vibrant mix of music highlighting themes of hope, community, and the shared experiences that bring us together.

We will be performing 4 solo concerts this season, along with our season's opening appearance at the Boston Handbell Festival, where we will join fellow ringers from across the region. Put one (or more!) of the concert dates on your calendar!

Admission is free and a free-will offering will be collected following the performances.

For more details, follow us on Facebook or contact us via info@mvringers.org

Spring 2026 Concert Schedule

Tuesday, May 19, 2026 – 7:30 pm
Boston Handbell Festival
Old South Church
Boston, MA

Saturday, May 30, 2026
Workshop – 12 noon-4:15 pm
Concert – 7:00 pm
Wilbraham United Church
Wilbraham, MA

Sunday, May 31, 2026 – 3:00 pm
Faith Lutheran Church
Andover, MA

Saturday, June 6, 2026 – 3:00 pm
First Church of Christ Congregational
Bedford, MA

Sunday, June 7, 2026 – 3:00 pm
South Congregational Church
Concord, NH

mvringers.org

Merrimack Valley Ringers

Here We Grow Preschool WOOSOX

Calling all members of Here We Grow Preschool…

Come out to Polar Park on Sunday June 7th, 2026, at 1:05 pm for an exciting afternoon of WooSox Baseball with Here We Grow Preschool! Kick off the summer with friends and family to cheer on the WooSox as they take on the Buffalo Bison! Each ticket purchased through this link includes:

- **University Dental Group Berm Ticket! Grassy area in left field where towels and blankets are welcome with first come first serve seating available.**

Make sure to stick around until the final out of the game to enjoy our post-game Kids Run the Bases! All fans are welcome to join us and take a lap around the infield.

Please contact Tom Steiger, tsteiger@woosox.com, 508-204-5383,

Worcester Red Sox vs. Buffalo Bisons
Jun 07, 2026, 1:05 PM EDT
Polar Park
100 Madison St, Worcester, MA 01608, US
Purchase Deadline: Jun 07, 2026, 11:05 AM

Here We Grow link to purchase tickets
Tickets: $15.24
Worcester Fellowship

Here We Grow Preschool

It does not seem possible that it is already May and we are entering the last full month of our school year. It feels like we were just greeting a new group of children and staff.

Thank you to everyone who donated to our calendar giveaway, whether you donated prizes or bought tickets. We appreciate you.

Do you like baseball? Join us June 7th at 1PM for the WooSox, tickets can be purchased using the link here.

Here We Grow Preschool

As the last full month of our school year begins, I wanted to share some of our favorite activities that get the kids up and moving, especially on these cool rainy spring days. Building an obstacle course, either indoors or outside, is a lot of fun and simple to do using everyday items. Dancing, just put on any music and get grooving, or play the freeze dance by randomly stopping the music and striking a pose. To practice shape/letter/number recognition write numbers/ letters or draw shapes on the driveway and hop from one to another and call out the name of what you land on.

We still have openings for the 2026-27 school year if you know of anyone looking for a great preschool experience, please send them our way.

We will begin collecting linens for our final clothing drive of the school year on May 18, once again, we can take clothes, shoes, belts, purses, sheets, blankets, curtains, etc. as well as books. Please put all linen items in bags and all books in boxes. The last day for donations will be June 5.

Happy Mother's Day and as always thank you for your continued support of Here We Grow, stay safe and healthy.

Cristi Corey Director, ***Here We Grow*** Preschool

SIDE by SIDE
CHARITABLE ORGANIZATION

2026 Side by Side Charitable Organization
Comedy Show & Auction

Join us for a fun evening of laughs & giving - all to support our local military heroes who have sacrificed so much for our country.

Grab your seat today!

Saturday, June 6, 2026
Registration & Cocktails Start at 5:30
Pleasant Valley Country Club
95 Armsby Road, Sutton, MA

Click Here to Purchase your Ticket or Find Out More Information

Habitat for Humanity®
MetroWest/Greater Worcester

We are beyond grateful for Side by Side Charitable Organization and their unwavering support of our veteran programs. Proceeds from this event support our affordable home builds, home repairs, and Operation Playhouse.

Read More About These Programs

Habitat for Humanity - Metro West Greater Worcester

Side by Side Charitable Organization | Providing Support to Veterans in Need

Recent Church Photos

Sunday's Worship May 3, 2026

Communion Sunday, May 3, 2026

Confirmands & Scripture Reader

Sunday School, Confirmation Information

May Tidings 2026

May is the final month of our traditional Sunday School program here at FCC Auburn. We are wrapping up lessons, painting rocks, celebrating mothers and preparing for (2) especially important Sundays.

First, we are looking forward to *Confirmation* Sunday when we celebrate our confirmation scholars. This group of (8) scholars have worked extremely hard over the year to create their personal statements of faith. It has been a time of learning, reflecting, prayer and understanding. This is the time for them to express their beliefs and be a little vulnerable in speaking up about what matters most to them. When they were Baptized, they had no choice; they were babies. On June 7th, our scholars have the opportunity to "Confirm" their Baptism. They will decide, as adults in the eyes of our church, where the spiritual journey will take them next. It has been both an honor and a privilege for me, to be their leader and teacher.

The following Sunday is "Children's Sunday." This is a special day, too, because the smallest members of our church family will be honored and celebrated. There will be children's songs and blessings galore. It is also a time to recognize our Sunday School staff and Board of Christian Education. Without them, none of this is possible. Arguably the best part of Children's Sunday is the barbeque after worship. A time for lots of fellowship, lawn games and full bellies. I look forward to seeing everyone there!!!!

Please keep your eyes and ears open for new things happening over the summer months. We hope to continue the new tradition of "water Sunday," and there may be some Bible stories and crafts happening during worship, in lieu of our traditional Sunday School classes. I am working on getting us an application to communicate better with Sunday School families on a regular basis, so no one misses anything!!!!

Thank you to all the families that joined us for our FIRST Sunday School Parent Open House (we need a better name for that)! I plan to have something similar during the summer. Please contact me if you have any suggestions.

Thank you so much to my teachers, Michele Schillinger and Jan Nowicki. It has been a pleasure collaborating with you this year. It has been a blessing to me, to have (2) Sunday School teachers that I can rely on and depend upon.

Thank you also to all the volunteers and parents that stayed with us during class time. It takes a village and I am so happy to be a part of it.

Peace and Love,
Shannon Hartmann
Director of Religious Education

Saturday Supper

Purchase your tickets for the 5/16/2026 Church Supper.

Menu: Family Style - Cranberry Stuffed Chicken, Corn Chowder, Salad, Baked Potato, Mixed Vegetables, Rolls & Butter, Dessert

Proceeds to be split between the Boy Scouts and the Church

Saturday Supper Tickets

Bible Study

We are moving on to another intense topic – the cost of discipleship. What does it mean to be a disciple of Jesus? How do we become disciples of Jesus, and what prevents us from best following Jesus's ways? Please read the chapter, "The Cost of Discipleship" in your booklet or read chapter five on the online version - click here or paste in your browser:

Bible Study C.S. Lewis Institute Chapters 4-10

Healing Worship and Blessing of the Hands

May 7th • 7:00 pm

Salem Covenant • 215 Mountain St E • Worcester, MA 01606

SAVE THE DATE! Our church is 250 years old this year, and we are going to celebrate this birthday with a series of events to honor our history, mission, and community spirit.

Friday, July 24 *another* ***Lumos Concert*** *Event prior to our Birthday Celebration*

Saturday, July 25th is the kick-off, with a church open house, lawn games, birthday cake, history display and speakers...and an outdoor movie in the evening.

🎉 Help Us Celebrate 250 Years! 🎉

Our 250th Anniversary celebration is coming up on July 25th, and we want YOU to be part of making this milestone truly unforgettable!

We are looking for volunteers to help in a variety of ways:

🌿 **Plan fun summer activities for the lawn**
📜 **Collect and display pieces of our church's rich history**
👕 **Help manage anniversary merchandise (shirts and more!) featuring our 250-year logo**
🤝 **Serve as welcoming hosts during the event—greeting guests, offering directions, and connecting with our community and future congregants**
🎤 **Share your voice as a speaker—during the event or in worship services throughout our anniversary year**

Do you remember our cheerleaders, bowling team, or church dances? We would LOVE your stories and photos to help bring our history to life!

There is a place for everyone to get involved—no matter your gifts or availability. Let us come together to celebrate where we have been and where we are going.

More details to come for our birthday bash!

Mother's Day Message for Our Church Family

Good morning, beloved church family! Happy Mother's Day to each of you. Today we celebrate not just with flowers and cards, but with hearts full of gratitude to God for the beautiful gift of motherhood in all its forms.

In Proverbs 31:25–26, Scripture says, "She is clothed with strength and dignity; she can laugh at the days to come. She speaks with wisdom, and faithful instruction is on her tongue." This verse reminds us that a godly woman reflects God's own heart—steady, wise, and full of grace.

From the very beginning, God showed the power of a nurturing spirit. In Isaiah 66:13, He says, "As a mother comforts her child, so will I comfort you." That is a beautiful picture of how mothers mirror the love and tenderness of God Himself.

Children, look around you. Every one of you is a miracle. The Bible tells us in Psalm 139:13, "For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb." God and woman work side by side to create life. The Lord is the Author of life, the One who designs every detail, every heartbeat, every personality. And He chooses to partner with a woman, giving her the sacred honor of carrying, nurturing, and bringing that life into the world. What an incredible partnership between our Creator and the mothers who say "yes" to His plan!

But today we honor more than just biological mothers. We thank God for every woman who pours love, wisdom, prayer, and care into our children. We celebrate the grandmothers who rock babies and tell stories of faith, the aunts who cheer at games and teach Sunday School lessons, the spiritual mothers who mentor, encourage, and show up with open arms and open hearts. Some of you have never had children of your own, yet the church is richer and our children are safer and more loved because you are here.

Mothers remind us daily of God's patience, His mercy, and His boundless compassion. In their arms, we catch a glimpse of divine love in action.

To every woman who has stayed up late praying for a child, who has wiped tears, bandaged knees, corrected with love, cooked meals, read Bible stories, and pointed little hearts toward Jesus—you are seen, you are valued, and you are deeply appreciated. Your labor is not in vain. As Proverbs 31:28 says, "Her children arise and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praises her."

Let us pray:

Heavenly Father, thank You for the gift of life and for every woman who reflects Your nurturing heart. Bless the mothers among us—those who are weary, those who are joyful, and those who feel unseen. Strengthen every woman raising children, whether by birth, by

choice, or by calling. May our church continue to be a place where mothers of all kinds are honored, supported, and lifted in prayer. And may the children here grow up to honor the women who loved them and to love You with all their hearts. In the name of Jesus, Amen.

Happy Mother's Day! May God bless you richly today and always. by Shannon Hartmann

Behavioral Covenant

As a congregation, we gather in the spirit of Jesus to create heaven on earth.

To succeed in our mission, we must practice open and honest communication among ourselves and with others.

We will speak from our hearts, trust each other, and assume good intentions.

We will listen carefully and without judging, seeking facts, ideas and inspirations.

We may disagree, and we will do so with respect. When we have concerns or questions, we will bring them directly to the person or group with responsibility.

We will do so with the expectation of being heard and understood and the possibility of deepening our own understandings.

In all this, we will speak with love and nourish our connections by sharing our laughter, our prayers, our lives, and ourselves.

THE FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH IN AUBURN, MASS (FCCA)

Job Title: Sexton/Maintenance

Reports To: FCCA Board of Trustees
Position Type: Part-time – 10 hours per week
Hours: Sunday thru Friday - 9:30 am to 10:30 pm (flexible)

Job Summary:
The Church Sexton acts as the primary custodian and caretaker for church buildings and grounds, responsible for cleaning, maintenance, security, and setting up for services and events. This role ensures a safe, clean, and welcoming environment, inclusive hospitality as well as a reverence for Christian faith and practice in community.

Sanctuary and Adult Library:
- Dust all pews, side display cases, windowsills
- Vacuum weekly
- Wash windows as needed

Deacons Closet:
- Vacuum as needed

Choir Room and Robe closet:
- Dust and vacuum weekly

Fellowship Hall:
- Dust windowsills, etc.
- Wash floors weekly
- Wash windows as needed
- Clean tables and chairs

Halls and Stairs:
- Floors swept and washed weekly
- Tile floors buffed as needed
- Vacuum carpet

Kitchens:
- Floors washed as needed (usually Mondays)
- Deep clean and sanitize (twice per year)

Rest Rooms:
- Floors washed weekly or more frequently if needed
- Replace toilet paper, soap, paper towels as needed

Outside Front Stairs and Porch:
- Swept as needed

Narthex:
- Dust and vacuum weekly

Church meeting rooms, Offices, Sunday School rooms (excluding historical room):
- Dust and vacuum weekly

All Exit Door Windows:
- Washed weekly

Other Responsibilities:
- Snow removal and Leaf from all walkways, exits, and steps prior to the church services (Sundays)
- Change light bulbs as needed
- Trash and Recycling removal from building to dumpster
- Coordinate dumpster empty as needed
- Order paper and cleaning supplies
- Bi-annually reset clocks for Daylight Savings Time reset thermostats
- Ensure church is securely locked upon exit of the building

Special Functions:
- Open/close church and turn on/off lights, Weddings, Funerals, Rentals

Job Title: Sexton/Maintenance

Core Responsibilities

Building Maintenance & Cleaning: Performing custodial tasks, including cleaning sanctuaries, offices, and restrooms.

Event Set-Up & Security: Preparing rooms for meetings, weddings, and services, and ensuring the building is locked and secure.

Grounds Upkeep: Maintaining the church exterior, which includes entry ways, clearing walkways of snow. .

Facility Management: Monitoring the facility for safety hazards, managing waste removal, and overseeing or performing minor repairs.

Qualifications and Skills:

Customer Service: A positive welcoming attitude and commitment to providing excellent service

Communication: Excellent verbal communication skills. Ability to interact effectively with church members, staff, and visitors in person. And Preschool.

Dependability: Ability to maintain a flexible schedule, including evenings and weekends for services.

Flexibility: Efficient time management and the ability to adjust to changing schedules and priorities based on church activities

Working Conditions: May require early mornings, nights, or weekends

Skills: Basic knowledge of cleaning supplies, facility maintenance tools, and safety procedures

Physical Requirements: Consistent and reliable, on-site attendance is an essential function of this position. Capable of lifting heavy objects 50+ lbs., cleaning, and manual labor.

Respectful Attitude: A respectful demeanor regarding the sacred nature of the building and interaction with congregants.

Experience: Previous experience in custodial or janitorial work preferred

Performance: Reviewed annually by FCCA Board of Trustees, or more frequently if needed.

Other: All other duties as assigned

First Congregational church in Auburn
Job Description of Church Secretary

The church secretary is a community liaison responsible for managing the administrative operations of the church office, including answering phone calls, maintaining membership records, filing documents, preparing church programs, and providing general clerical support to the church staff, all while upholding the church's values and providing a welcoming atmosphere to members and visitors.

Key Responsibilities:

- Answering phone calls and directing inquiries to appropriate staff
- Maintaining church office filing systems
- Greeting visitors with a welcoming presence and providing information about church services and activities
- Maintaining accurate membership records, including contact information
- Process new membership/baptismal/wedding applications and updates
- Typing correspondence and reports as needed
- Coordinating with other church staff on administrative tasks
- Assisting with planning and logistics for church events (weddings, funerals, special services)
- Sending out invitations and managing RSVP's
- Monitor signing out/in church keys
- Maintaining church calendar
- Proficient in creating Weekly Emails, Sunday Bulletins and Monthly Tidings with graphics, to be printed and sent electronically.

Desired Skills:

- **Excellent communication skills**: Ability to interact effectively with church members, staff, and visitors, both in person and over the phone
- **Strong organizational skills**: Efficiently managing multiple tasks and deadlines
- **Attention to detail**: Ensuring accuracy in maintaining records and documents
- **Proficiency in Microsoft Office Suite**: Word, Excel, and Outlook for creating documents and managing data
- **Proficient in Internet skills**: Facebook, Social Media
- **Confidentiality**: Maintaining privacy of sensitive church information
- **Customer Service Focus**: A positive attitude and commitment to providing excellent service to church members
- **Flexibility**: Efficient time management and the ability to adjust to changing schedules and priorities based on church activities
- **Marketing**: Coordinate marketing social events to the wider community in many

forms including social media

Auburn Troop 101

Annual Yard Sale

Location:

Auburn Public Library

369 Southbridge St, Auburn, MA

Date:

Saturday, May 23, 2026,

7am to 3pm

Furniture
_____
Housewares
_____
Books
_____
Tools
_____
Sporting Goods
_____
Toys
_____
Exercise Equipment
_____
Antiques
_____
Decorations
_____
Much More!!

Auburn Troop 101

Annual Yard Sale

Seeking Donations

Items that we can Accept*:

- **Kitchen Goods -** pots, pans, utensils, dishes, mugs, glassware, vases, etc.
- **Household Items –** wall-mirrors, artwork, picture frames, and other knickknacks.
- **Furniture -** Tables, chairs, couches, bookshelves, and other furniture that is in good condition.
- **Hand Tools** - hammers, screwdrivers, wrenches, pliers, gardening tools, shovels, rakes, sockets, levels, etc.
- **Sport/Camping Equipment -** Bikes, Toys, Games, Puzzles, Tent, Backpacks, Books, Stuffed Animals, etc.

Items we CANNOT Accept*:

- No Electronics - nothing with a cord or battery powered.
- No Oversized Items - Hutch, Sleeper Sofas, Mattresses.
- No Carpeting, Rugs, Cloths, Fabric, Shoes, etc.
- No Hazardous Materials, Tires, or Batteries.
- No Car Seats
- *Volunteers Picking up have the right to refuse items that cannot be sold.

May 2026

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
CELEBRATE			CELEBRATE		1 Cadets #65038 4:30 p.m.	2 Women's Retreat 9-4
3	4 Mother's Day Floral Event 6:00 p.m. Cadets #65016 4:30 p.m. HWG Bd Mtg 6:30 p.m.	5 ACB 9 a.m. Bible Study 12:30 p.m. AA Meeting 5:00 p.m. Cadets #65515 6:30 p.m.	6 Confirmation Meeting 5:30 p.m. Choir Rehearsal 6 p.m. Cub Scouts 6:30 p.m.	7 ACB 9 a.m. Healing Workshop — Salem Covenant Church 6:30 p.m. Boy Scouts 7 p.m.	8	9
10 Mother's Day Casual Coffeehouse Worship Stewardship Mtg 11:30 a.m.	11 Brownies & Juniors #65327 6 p.m.	12 ACB 9 a.m. Bd of Outreach 10:30 a.m. Bible Study 12:30 p.m. AA Meeting 5 p.m. Cadets #65515 6:30 p.m.	13 Confirmation Meeting 5:30 p.m. Choir Rehearsal 6 p.m. Cub Scouts 6:30 p.m.	14 ACB 9 a.m. BOCE 6:30 p.m. Boy Scouts 7 p.m.	15 Cadets #65038 4:30 p.m.	16
17 Baptism—Clara Cecilia Otis Chilton, Eagle Scout of Honor (Troop 101)	18 Cadets #65016 4:30 p.m. Women's Wellness by Jan Nowicki 6 p.m.	19 ACB 9 a.m. Bible Study 12:30 p.m. Music Committee 2 p.m. AA Meeting 5 p.m. Parkinson's/Dementia Spt Gp 6 p.m.	20 Confirmation Meeting 5:30 p.m. Choir Rehearsal 6 p.m. Cub Scouts 6:30 p.m.	21 ACB 9 a.m. Boy Scouts 7 p.m. Board of Trustees 7 p.m.	22	23
24 Memorial Day Baptism—Renee Collins	25 CLOSED	26 ACB 9 a.m. Bible Study 12:30 p.m. AA Meeting 5 p.m. Cadets #65515 6:30 p.m.	27 Confirmation Meeting 5:30 p.m. Choir Rehearsal 6 p.m. Cub Scouts 6:30 p.m.	28 ACB 9 a.m. Boy Scouts 7 p.m. Council Meeting 7 p.m.	29 Wedding Katerlyn Chalupka & Noah Thompson	30
31 New Member Sunday Board of Deacons 11 a.m.						