



EARTH DAY SERMONCRAFT
4/21 @ 10AM, LIVE ON-SITE & ONLINE
Connect @ www.NeedhamUCC.com

The Congregational Church of Needham, *United Church of Christ*

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Rev. John Gage, *senior minister*
Rev. Maddie Foster, *acting senior minister*
Valerie Becker, *director of music*
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Pastor-Parish Relations Committee

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April 21, 2024: Fourth Sunday in Eastertide

GATHERING

*Featuring a slideshow by Jenni Haynes
& poem by Mary Oliver*

PRELUDE

Prelude in F major by Johann Krebs Valerie Becker, organ

WELCOME

Rev. Maddie Foster

CALL TO WORSHIP *inspired by Psalm 8*

One: Wonderful God! Awesome God!
How majestic is your name in all the universe.

ALL: Wonderful God! Awesome God!
How majestic is your name in all the universe.

One: Your glory is woven through the fabric of the heavens.
Everywhere we turn, below us, beside us, above us,
all that we experience is evidence of your presence.
Soil, grass, water, sun, moon, and stars,
all of them proof of your work in the universe.

ALL: Wonderful God! Awesome God!
How majestic is your name in all the universe.

One: We wonder: why do you care about us?
What are we compared to the galaxies spread across time and
space, or to the amazing worlds of life too small for us to see
or to the great animals of land and sea?

ALL: Wonderful God! Awesome God!
How majestic is your name in all the universe.

One: You have called us to be caretakers,
giving us curiosity and wonder that drive us to explore
the entirety of creation from the microscopic worlds of
bacteria and atoms to the telescopic worlds orbiting stars
billions of miles away.

ALL: Wonderful God! Awesome God!
How majestic is your name in all the universe.

One: We are called to care for every life here on earth,
and to seek out life that may exist out there in your universe,
all life everywhere, a part of your sacred work of creation.

ALL: Wonderful God! Awesome God!

How majestic is your name in all the universe.

*ALL: Let us worship God together, in spirit and in truth, in word
and in deed.*

HYMN

Stars and Planets Flung in Orbit (see below)

LITANY FOR OUR EARTH

ALL-AGES HANDS-ON SERMONCRAFT

*There are special activities planned for both on-site and online
participants.*

HYMN

Blue Boat Home (see below)

SHARING OUR PRAYERS (“O God, hear our prayer”)

THE LORD’S PRAYER

(using these or whichever words are closest to your own heart)

**Our Father/Mother in heaven, holy is your name. Your reign come,
your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily
bread. And forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against
us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For
yours is the kin-dom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.**

ANTHEM

For the Beauty of the Earth John Rutter Chancel Choir

For the beauty of the earth, For the glory of the skies,

For the love which from our birth

Over and around us lies, Over and around us lies

'Lord of all, to Thee we raise, This our joyful hymn of praise

For the beauty of each hour, Of the day and of the night,

Hill and vale and tree and flow'r

*Sun and Moon and stars of light, Sun and Moon and stars of light
'Lord of all, to Thee we raise, This our joyful hymn of praise*

*For the joy of human love (For the joy of love),
Brother, sister, parent, child (Brother, sister, parent, child)
Friends on earth (Friends on earth) and friends above (And friends above)
For all gentle thoughts and mild (For all gentle thoughts and mild),
For all gentle thoughts and mild
'Lord of all, to Thee we raise,
This our joyful hymn (Our joyful hymn) of praise (Of praise)*

*For each perfect gift of Thine, To our race so freely given,
Graces human (Given) and divine (Human and divine)
Flow'rs of earth and buds of heav'n, Flow'rs of earth and buds of heav'n
'Lord of all, to Thee we raise, This our joyful hymn (Our joyful hymn) of
praise, (This our joyful hymn) Our hymn of praise*

PARTNERING IN THE GOOD NEWS

SINGING OUR THANKS AND PRAISE

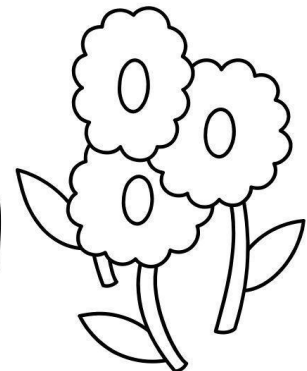
**Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
Praise God, all creatures here below;
Praise God above, you heavenly hosts
Creator, Christ, and Holy Ghost.**

SENDING FORTH

POSTLUDE



CARE FOR
CREATION



CHURCH ACTIVITIES & ANNOUNCEMENTS: April 21, 2024



We Need YOU to Teach Sunday School!

Both our Sunday School and Youth Group programs rely on the help of volunteers to teach and lead! All of the material prep is done in advance by Rev. Maddie and lesson plans are available online to make teaching as straightforward as possible for our volunteers. When you arrive to teach you simply grab the box marked for that Sunday, give everything a once-over, and prepare to welcome kids to the classroom! **Sign up at this link:**

<https://tinyurl.com/CEYouth2324>



Sabbatical Project: Lay Preachers Series

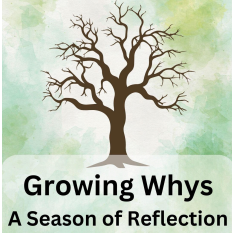
While Rev. John is on sabbatical (until May 19), we'll be reconnecting to our ministry as a congregation through a series of sermons delivered by church members serving on our ministry teams. **Upcoming dates: Open & Affirming (4/28), and Outreach (5/12).** These preaching teams will be working with our consulting pastor, Rev. Chris Mereschuk, to share with us not just what they do, but why, and how it connects to their faith and our shared faith. Please make plans to attend those Sundays to support your fellow members and learn more about who we are as a congregation and who God is calling us to become.



Needham UCC & Me: Our Local Church & Denomination

Sunday, May 5 @ 11:11, Reception room

Learn about the ministry of our church and our participation in our denomination, the United Church of Christ. This program is open to anyone but can be particularly useful for folks who have recently become members or who are considering making Needham UCC their spiritual home through membership.



Growing Whys: A Season of Reflection

Contribute your intention to our “Growing Whys” beginning April 21!

Our preaching teams have reflected on the “whys” of their ministries within our church community. Now you are invited to set an intention for yourself and the ways you hope to grow in relationship and engage in the life and ministry of the church. Write your intention on the leaf post-its provided during worship and add it to our tree or message the Zoom greeter and they can add one for you. *In the fall, you’ll be invited to reflect on the ways you’ve lived into that intention, or ways you understand your intention in a new way. You may wish to hold on to some symbol, photo, or small token of your intention from your summer months to bring back and share.*



**SAVE THE DATE: Welcome Back BBQ for Rev. John!
(And Confirmation! And Pentecost!)**

Sunday, May 19 @ 11:11, Fellowship Hall

Join us for worship and fellowship on Sunday, May 19 when we welcome Rev. John back from sabbatical (and celebrate Confirmation and Pentecost!) with a big BBQ! Can you help with setting up? Email RevMaddie@NeedhamUCC.org

***Would you like to make this congregation your church home?
Would you like to know more about what it means to be a member here?
Reach out to Rev. Maddie at revmaddie@needhamucc.org***



Kids'N'Church

Children of all ages are always welcome in worship! **Quiet books and pew pals** (soft toys) are available in our **family room**, just outside the sanctuary, where you'll also find a cozy couch, big toy box, and a speaker that broadcasts the service. All bathrooms have **changing tables**. Our **Nursery** is available for infants & toddlers when volunteers are available. **Sunday School** (for children in older Pre-K through Grade 5) and **Youth Group** (grades 6-12) are both offered during our 10am worship service on the 2nd & 4th Sundays. All children and youth remain in the sanctuary with their families to share **communion** (as parents decide), usually on the first Sunday of the month.

Have questions about our Children's and Youth Ministries?

Check in with Rev. Maddie after the service or email

RevMaddie@NeedhamUCC.org



Your support makes a difference.

You may notice we do not collect an offering during our worship service but there are multiple ways to give financially. You can leave a cash or check offering in the collection plate in the foyer outside the sanctuary. Paypal, credit, or debit card donations can be made online at: **www.NeedhamUCC.org/giving**

Thank you for your generous contributions to support the work of our congregation and our ministry partners in our community and around the world.

Stars and Planets Flung in Orbit

Stars and planets flung in orbit,
galaxies that swirl through space,
Powers hid within the atom,
cells that form an infant's face;
These, O God, in silence praise you;
by your wisdom they are made.

Skies adorned with Sunset splendor,
silent peaks in calm repose,
Golden fields awaiting harvest,
foaming surf and fragrant rose;
Earth, its bounty clothed with beauty,
echoes all creation's praise.

Life in wondrous, wild profusion,
seed and fruit, each flower and tree,
Beast and fish and swarming insect,
soaring bird, rejoicing, free;
These, your creatures, join in chorus,
praising you in wordless song.

Humankind, earth's deepest mystery,
born of dust but touched by grace,
Torn apart by tongue and color,
yet a single, striving race;
We, in whom you trace your image,
add our words to nature's song.

Blue Boat Home

Though below me, I feel no motion
Standing on these mountains and plains
Far away from the rolling ocean
Still my dry land heart can say
I've been sailing all my life now
Never harbor or port have I known
The wide universe is the ocean I travel
And the earth is my blue boat home

Sun, my sail, and moon my rudder
As I ply the starry sea
Leaning over the edge in wonder
Casting questions into the deep

Drifting here with my ship's companions
All we kindred pilgrim souls
Making our way by the lights of the heavens
In our beautiful blue boat home

I give thanks to the waves upholding me
Hail the great winds urging me on
Greet the infinite sea before me
Sing the sky my sailor's song
I was born upon the fathoms
Never harbor or port have I known
The wide universe is the ocean I travel
And the earth is my blue boat home