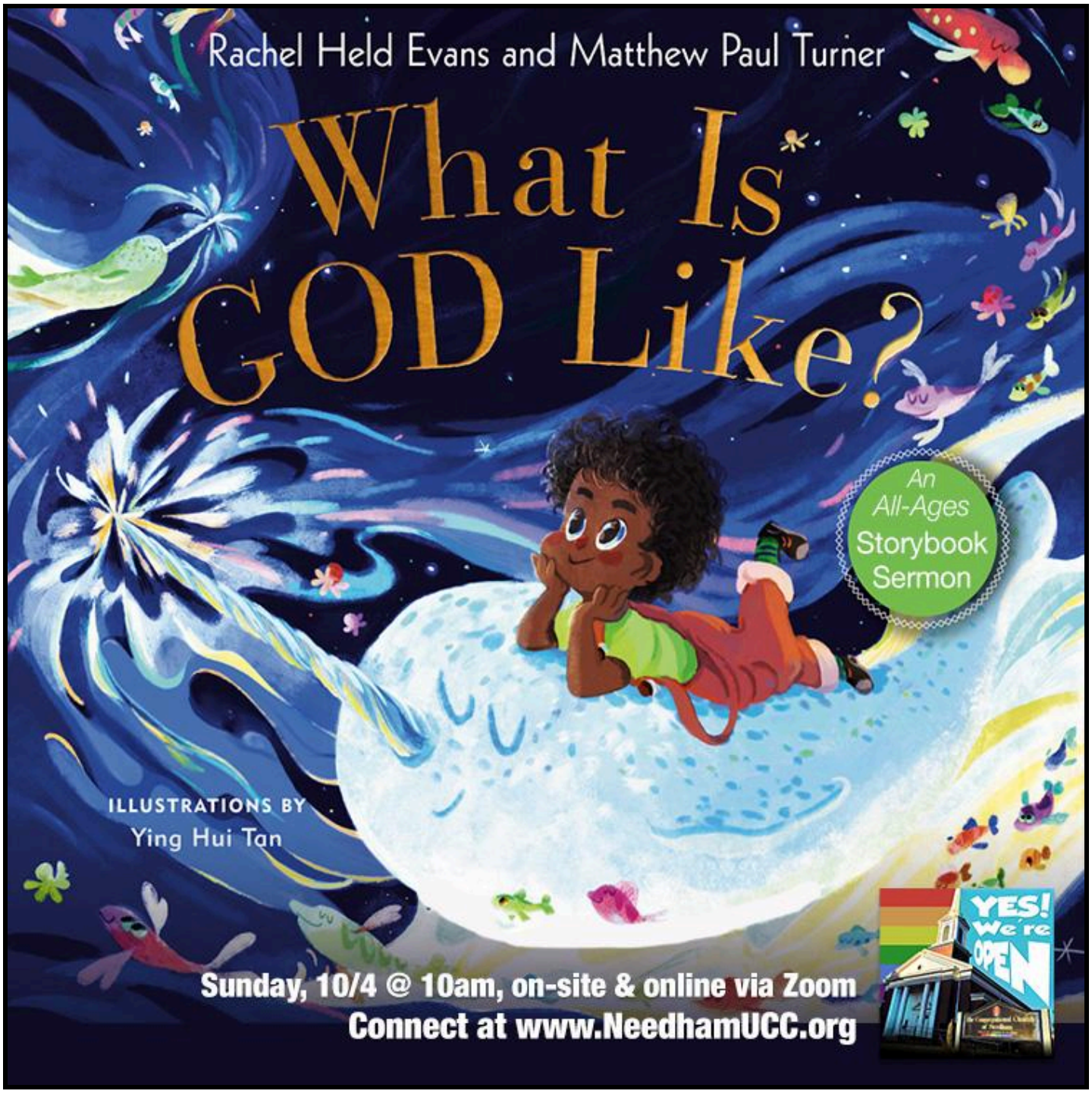


**The Congregational Church of Needham, *United Church of Christ***

1154 Great Plain Ave, Needham MA 02492 / Tel 781.444.2510 / www.NeedhamUCC.org / IG @NeedhamUCC

| | |
|---|---|
| Rev. John Gage, *senior minister* | revjohn@needhamucc.org |
| Valerie Becker, *director of music* | musicdirector@needhamucc.org |
| Darlene Wong, *director for children & youth* | childrenandyouth@needhamucc.org |
| Robin Bevilacqua, *church operations manager* | office@needhamucc.org |
| Cindy Sullivan, *financial administrator* | finance@needhamucc.org |
| Tom Mollerus, *moderator* | moderator@needhamucc.org |
| Pastor-Parish Relations Committee | prc@needhamucc.org |

**Welcome! Please take a moment to let us know you're here,** whether you are an official church member, a frequent guest, or a first-timer. **Scan this QR code with the camera on your phone and follow the link to sign-in.** *There's a paper sign-in sheet in the foyer, if you prefer.*

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**Our Church Covenant** *At the Congregational Church of Needham, United Church of Christ, we strive to be a joyful, welcoming Christian Community. We seek to be faithful in a world torn by suffering, injustice, oppression, and war. We are inspired by God, Christ's Ministry, and the examples of other faithful people. We join together in worship and song, fellowship, study, and mission to embrace the risks and challenges of continuing Christ's ministry. We struggle to live out our faith in the world by furthering justice and peace, witnessing to the truth, and proclaiming God's love and mercy for all people.*

**Our Open and Affirming Covenant** *We believe that all people are created in the image of God, who loves each of us as we are. Following the example of Jesus, we welcome and affirm all people, including those of every age, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression; every racial, ethnic and cultural identity, and country of origin; every faith background, family configuration and economic situation; every mental and physical ability and health status; every life experience and circumstance. We strive to be an example of God's extravagant welcome and to live these beliefs in our worship, language, actions and relationships. We invite all people who desire to join us in this journey of faith to share in the full life and ministry of this church.*

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**If you are a guest with us today, a special welcome to you!** We'd love to know that you're here. Please sign in using the QR code at the top of this page or the physical attendance sheet in the lobby. If you'd like to learn more about our church or what it means to be a member here, please reach out to Rev. John at **revjohn@needhamucc.org**.

**Children of all ages are always welcome in worship! Quiet books** and **pew pals** (soft toys) are available in the narthex/foyer just outside the sanctuary doors. All accessible bathrooms have **changing tables**.

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**WIFI in the sanctuary:** **UCC_Guest**, password: **needhamucc**

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## FOR TODAY:

**There is NO Sunday school today.** Kids are invited to stay in the sanctuary with their families to enjoy today's all-ages Storybook Sermon worship service. To register your child for Sunday School at the following link: **https://forms.gle/CrFjkczrLcH3hXwcA**

### Baby Basics Groceries Ongoing Food Collection

Every Sunday we collect specific proteins for the groceries we give to the families accessing diapers through Baby Basics every other month. In September we're looking for **small cans of tuna fish.**

## ***October 4, 2026: Storybook Sermon***

And still, pressed deep into my mind, the river/ keeps coming, touching me, passing by on its/ long journey, its pale, infallible voice/ singing.

– from "At the River Clarion" by Mary Olilver

**PRELUDE** *Moderator in G major* by J.S. Bach Valerie Becker, *organist*

**WELCOME** Rev. John MacIver Gage

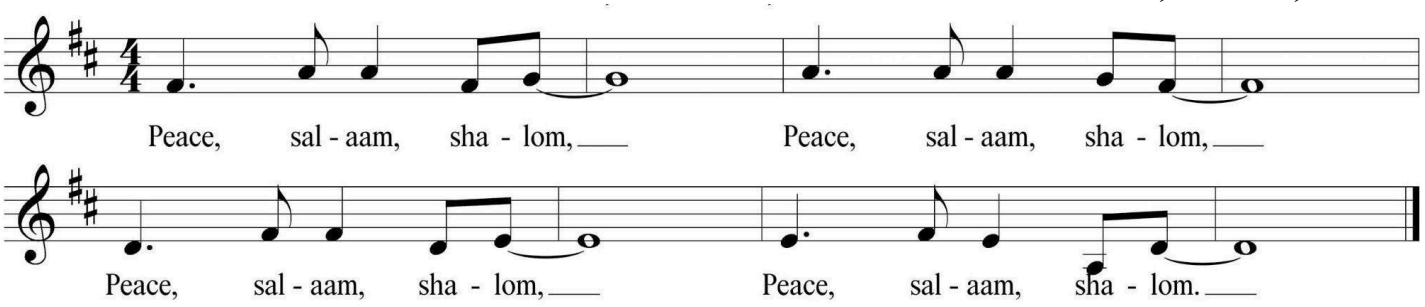
**CALL TO WORSHIP**

One: Sisters, brothers, siblings, gather around–
**Many: Come and worship!**
One: Even if you're tired and worn out and need a nap–
**Many: Come and worship!**
One: Set down whatever heavy burdens you're carrying–
**Many: Come and worship!**
One: Listen for what God wants to tell you–
**Many: Come and worship!**
One: See if you can discover how the Spirit wants to work with you–
**Many: Come and worship!**
One: For Jesus is humble and kind and just, and will give us everything we need to follow in his Gospel way.
***All*: *Let us worship God together in spirit and in truth, in word and in deed.***

**HYMN** ***This is My Father's World*** *(see below)*

**GREETING ONE ANOTHER IN PEACE** ("Peace be with you / **And also with you"**)

**PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION** ***Peace, Salaam, Shalom,***




**STORYBOOK SERMON** *What is God Like?* Darlene Wong, *director of children & youth ministries*
*by Rachel Held Evans & Matthew Paul Turner, illustration by Ying Hui Tan*

**HYMN** ***How Can We Name a Love*** *(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** *Deep River,* African-American Spiritual, arr. Earlene Rentz Chancel Choir

Deep river, my home is over Jordan.
Deep river, Lord, I want to cross over into campground.
Deep river, my home is over Jordan.
Deep river, Lord, I want to cross over into campground.
Oh, don't you want to go to that gospel feast, that promised land where all is peace.
Deep river, my home, my home is over Jordan.
Deep river, Lord, I want to cross over into campground.
I want to cross over. Deep river, oh, Lord, deep river oh, Lord.

**INVITATION TO DEEPER RELATIONSHIP**

*Feeling like you might like to make this congregation your church home? Curious to learn more about who we are and how we practice our faith and what membership means here? Reach out to Rev. John at* **revjohn@needhamucc.org**

**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 host–Creator, Christ, and Holy Ghost.**

**WE ARE BLESSED TO BE A BLESSING**

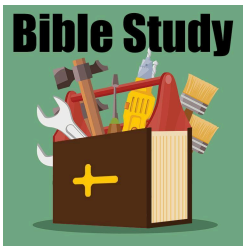
**POSTLUDE**

# OPPORTUNITIES TO GET INVOLVED: October 4, 2026

## Children & Youth Ministries

**Register your child for Sunday School** at the following link:
**https://forms.gle/CrFjkczrLcH3hXwcA**

**Sign up to help with Sunday School:** Every Sunday we need at least one volunteer from the congregation to help lead Sunday school. (Our Safe Church Policy–and our love for our kids–requires that we always have two unrelated adults in the classroom.) Will you help us share God's love with the youngest among us? **Sign up at this link:**
**https://docs.google.com/document/d/1ONwEBXFjwykTz8QU58rgAflm4QTkNziHytxxi-E5Qa8/edit?usp=sharing**




## A Six-Week Overview of the Bible for Anyone & Everyone

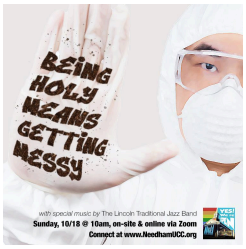
**Sundays through 10/25 @ 8:30-9:30am, on-site in the church library & online via Zoom at**
**https://us06web.zoom.us/j/3608741029?omn=83460325912**

Have you ever found the Bible hard to understand? Have you ever wished you had a better sense of how its many books, stories, people, and ideas fit together? Or perhaps you simply have questions about the Bible that you would enjoy exploring with other people. If so, please consider joining us for **A Six-Week Overview of the Bible**, Sunday mornings from **8:30–9:30am**, on-site in the church library and on Zoom. The course will run six Sundays through **10/25**. No prior Bible knowledge is required. Our goal will be to explore the Bible's big picture together—what it is, how it is organized, the story it tells, and some of the questions it raises. Clark Curtis, Avery Casper-Filbin, and Sue Turner will facilitate the course. We hope you'll join us for an opportunity to get to know the Bible—and one another—a little better.

## God: *A (re)Confirming Faith Sermon with Brunch to Follow*

**10/11 @ 10am, on-site & online via Zoom at http://zoom.us/j/907548568**

We can't say everything there is to know about God. All our language about God, even our direct experience of God is as limited as our finite human comprehension. But we can say something, even something true, just at a slant. God isn't a father, but God is *like* a father. God isn't a rock, or a mother hen, or the "ground of all being" or "that than which no greater can be conceived," but God is *like* all these and more. God is always *more*, and the moment we limit God to "our poor reach of mind," we've made yet another idol. Our spiritual ancestors wrestled with this question for millennia. Now it's our turn. Who/ what/ how/ where/ when/ is God for you at this point in your life, and why? (Acts 17:16-34)




## Being Holy Means Getting Messy

with special music by The Lincoln Traditional Jazz Band
**10/18 @ 10am, on-site & online via Zoom at http://zoom.us/j/907548568**

In *If Grace Is True: Why God Will Save Every Person,* authors Philip Gulley and James Mulholland write: "I know a woman who is fanatically clean. Her home is spotless. She dons white gloves and moves from room to room, checking for dust. . . .Sometimes we talk as if God is similarly obsessed," as though to be truly holy means to remove oneself (and one's church) from contact with the less-than-perfect world. But God knows–and Jesus shows–being holy means engaging with the messy world, trusting God's grace to anchor us in justice, peace, and compassion. (Leviticus 10:*selected verses*)

## Be Not Afraid

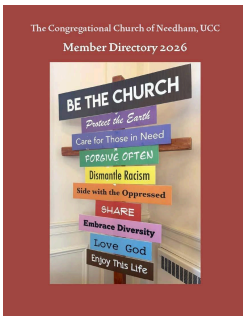
An All-Ages Hands-On SermonCraft Sunday
**10/25 @ 10am, on-site & online via Zoom at http://zoom.us/j/907548568**

Halloween is a time for friendly, fun, imaginary frights. But sometimes actually frightening things happen in our lives. Whenever that happened to people in the Bible, God would encourage them to "Be not afraid"--not because those things weren't actually scary but because God promises to always be with us when things go bump in the night, and God's love is stronger than any scary thing we can imagine. Instead of our usual sort of sermon, this worship service will include an all-ages craft for us to share together.

## LGBT Asylum Task Force Annual Gala, "We Persist"

**Saturday, 10/10 @ 5:30-11pm,** *Mechanics Hall, 321 Main St, Worcester, MA*

The LGBT Asylum Task Force, a ministry of Hadwen Park Congregational Church, UCC, in Worcester, provides housing, food, clothing, financial and personal support as well as legal assistance to LGBT folks seeking political asylum in the United States to escape oppression and violence in their home countries. Their biggest and most important fundraiser of the year is their annual gala, this year themed, appropriately, "We Persist." Won't you consider buying tickets and attending in support of the incredible work they're doing? **Tickets are on sale now at this link: https://givebutter.com/c/tfgala26.** When you purchase your tickets, please let our own Kathie Carpenter know **via email** so she can keep track of our congregation's support for these new neighbors in need.




## New Church Directory!

We're delighted to announce that after far too long a time, we have a brand new church directory of church members, which includes a section of beautiful full-color photos. If you haven't picked one up yet and would like to get your own copy, they are available every Sunday after worship. (Just ask Rev. John.) If you are an official member of the church or a consistent participant, we'd also be happy to send you a physical copy. Simply email Robin Bevilacqua in the church office at **office@needhamucc.org**, and she will verify your information and send you one via USPS. You can also arrange a time to pick one up in person, if you prefer.

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## Volunteer for Trunk or Treat 2026!

- **We are looking for volunteers to serve in the following roles on Saturday, 10/24**
- **Volunteers arrive at 1pm and leave by 5pm**

**Trunk Decorators:** Let your creative juices flow as you design and execute a themed trunk! Prefer to pick up a pre-made kit from Target or Amazon? That's cool, too! No matter how detailed or DIY, your trunk will be a welcome addition to our roster. Your friendly smile and a treat for the kids (which we'll provide) are really all that are needed to make your trunk a success. And if you need ideas or supplies, let us know in advance and we can help you out!

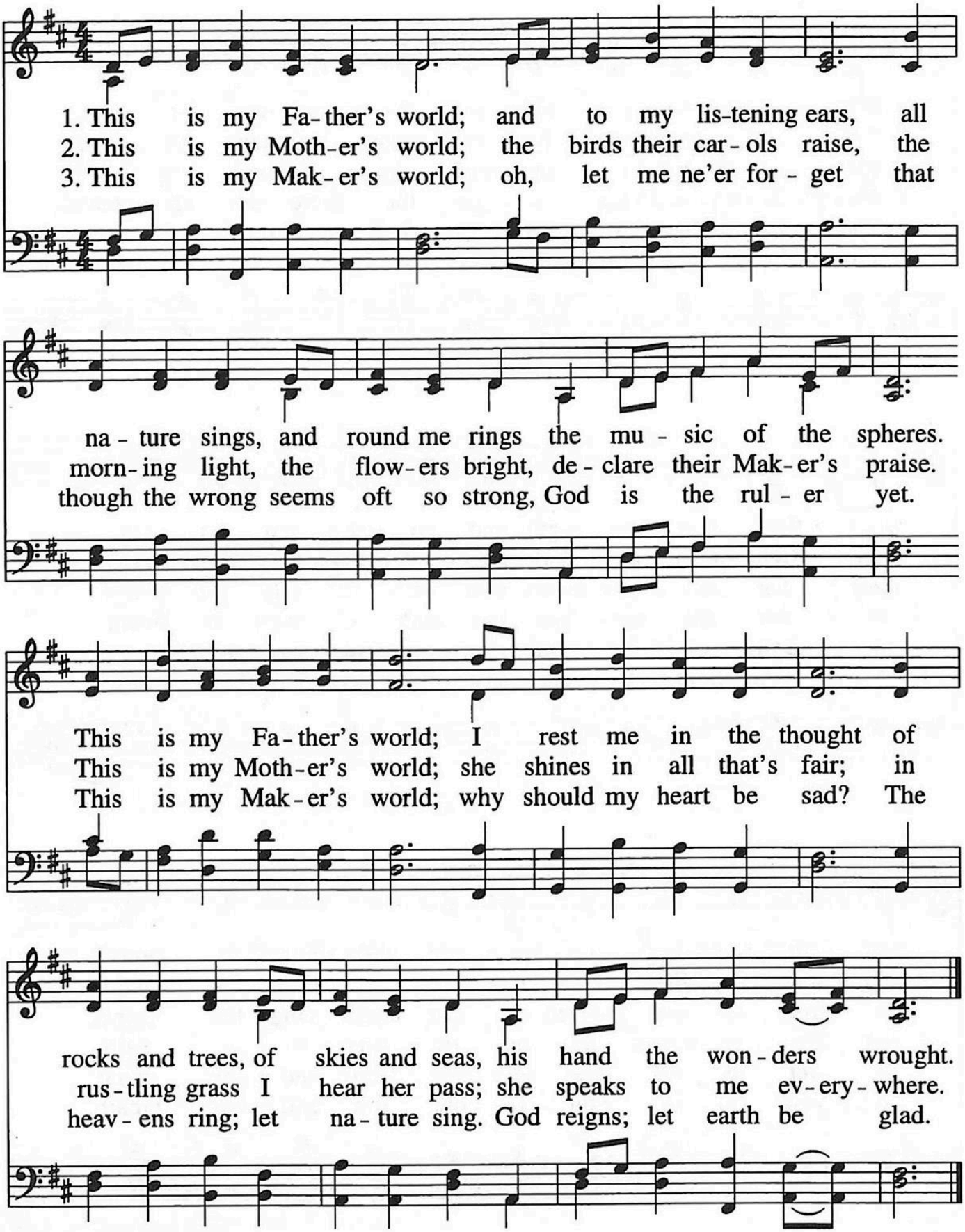
**Runners:** If you've ever thought being a personal assistant for a day could be fun, this "all purpose" role is the one for you! You'll help with set-up, clean-up, and everything in between. Your primary job during the event is to distribute and refill treat and candy buckets to our trunks. You will 100% get your steps in.

**Welcome Tablers:** An extrovert's dream job – you'll welcome families to our event. Give them a trick or treat bag if needed and thank them for coming. If anyone wants to make a donation to help support the event, you can help them by pointing out the QR code, Square card reader, and donation box. If someone needs a bathroom during the event, you'll guide them inside.

**Photo Attendants:** Simply ask folks if they'd like you to take a picture of them with their kids. It's that easy.

### SIGN UP AT THIS LINK:

**https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/19O5WATBu-NYkfOXoMvUbUR-8Bm61s3ou/edit?usp=sharing&ouid=118026036160138802078&rtpof=true&sd=true**

# This is My Father's World

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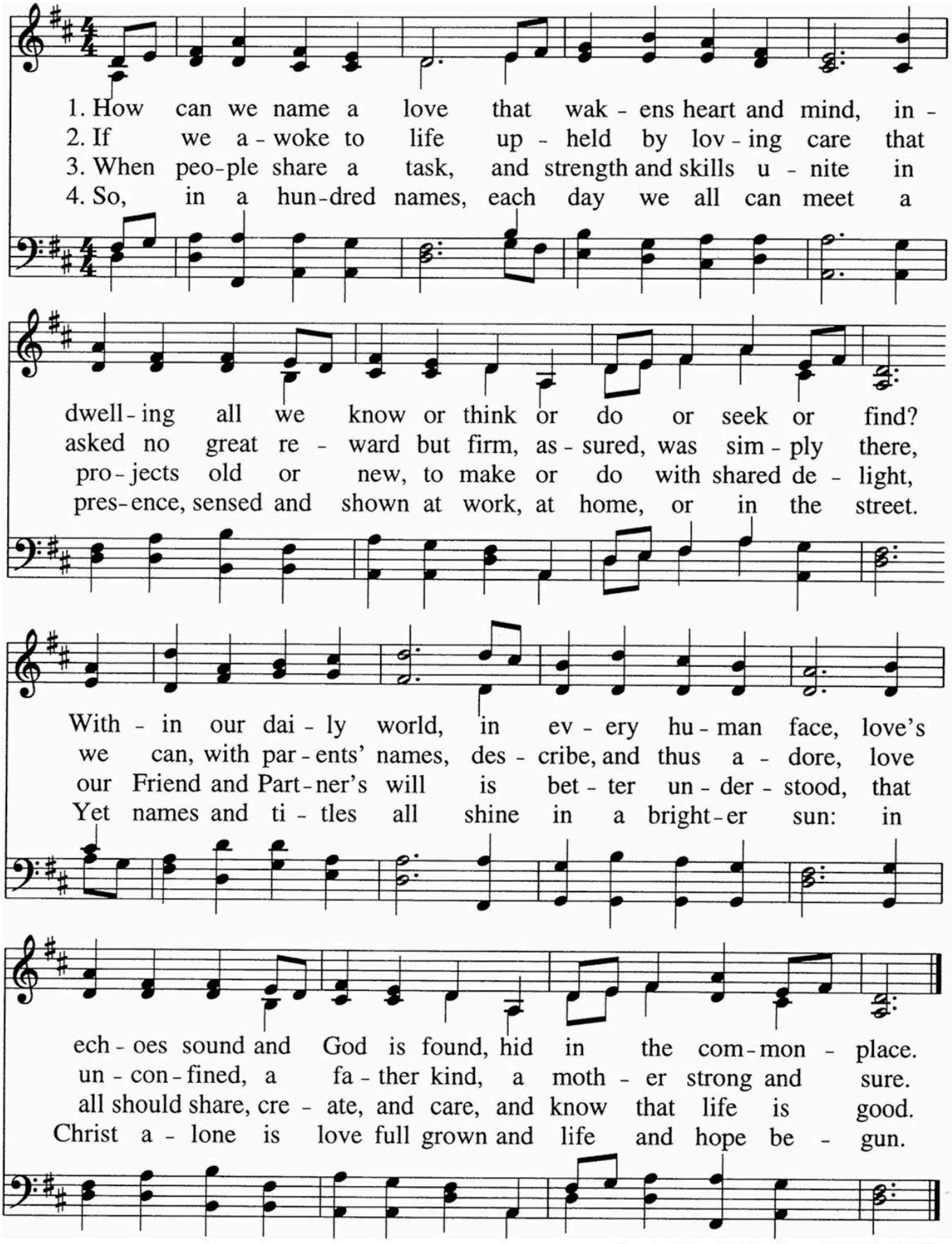
# How Can We Name a Love

Text: B. Wren (1973); Tune: TERRA BEATA