



### WELCOME BRUNCH FOR REV. JOHN MACIVER GAGE!

On September 30, 2018, by a vote of the Congregation at a Special Meeting, Rev. John McIver Gage was called to serve as our next Senior Minister. John begins his ministry with us on January 2, 2019.

The Board of Deacons and the Board of Directors want you all to be a part of this exciting new chapter in the life of our church; and to join us in warmly welcoming John to our faith community.

Please plan to worship with John at his first service on January 6, 2019. And, be sure and attend the Welcome Brunch immediately following the January 6 worship service.

Please remember to wear a name tag in the coming months so John can begin to put names to faces.

John is excited to meet you and get to know you as he joins us in the ministry of the church. Together, we make this church stronger, more vibrant, more joyful and better able to do Christ's ministry near and far.

Please join us as we continue our journey of faith together!

### A Message from Rev. Rick

When I began as your "Bridge Minister" back last November, it was clear to me how fast the two months would go. They went! Altogether with Thanksgiving and Christmas the time flew by. Was it a sprint, or was it a marathon for me? More like, both! Which is to say, intense from start to finish.

And what a gratifying experience for me, to meet such a convivial fellowship of people who welcomed me and made me feel completely at home, for which I thank you. I found you are a congregation with remarkable, outstanding resilience. As I came to know your history, your plans and your hopes, I saw the depth of your commitment to this church. Unflagging, is how I would put it. Despite some attrition and despite the grief that must attend pastoral transitions, your loyalty through thick and thin was apparent to me.

I perceive you mean business, you are here to "Be the Church." I applaud you! And I will remember you for the meaningful, productive time we had together. I take many nice memories with me to ponder on my walks and drives. As my favorite Liberace song goes, "I'll be looking at the moon, but I'll be seeing you."

I wish you every blessing for the New Year and your evolving new ministries, Rev. Rick Chrisman

# ANNUAL MEETING

# JAN. 27TH

# save THE DATE!

# ANNUAL HEARING

# JAN. 20TH



**Don't Miss the Partner-Family Letter Deadline -Sunday, January 6th!**



Partner-family (and scholarship donor) letters will be overdue after January 6th, so if you haven't

already sent in your letter to Dave Johnson, please do so ASAP: [davebjohnson77@gmail.com](mailto:davebjohnson77@gmail.com). Dave immediately sends your letter out to our gracious team of volunteer translators, who need your letters now, in order to get them translated for delivery by the February delegation. Please help Dave with this challenging task that he undertakes on behalf of about 140 families here and 140 corresponding families in Santa María Tzejá, who anxiously hope to receive your letter! Thank you.

**Gratitude for Holiday Giving**

We want to acknowledge the generous holiday spirit shown by church families in their donations of school supplies and project funds for Santa María Tzejá

via the Giving Tree as well as Alternative Giving. Many thanks.

**Thanks for Outreach Funding**

The February 2019 delegation is grateful to the Outreach Committee for providing \$4,000 toward a fencing project to allow members of the village's Women's Union to grow vegetables and fruits for their families.

**February 2019 Delegation**

The church's February delegation (Feb. 13-24) is complete and begins training sessions in January. Brenda Metzler and Fred Moder will co-lead this diverse group of 12 travelers, who hail from Needham, Wellesley, Natick, and Oregon. (If you missed your opportunity with this delegation, contact Caryl Johnson or Alan Clayton-Matthews to inquire about joining the August 2019 delegation).

**Save the Dates!**

Delegation Send-Off: Feb. 12, 7:00 pm at Jerry Durbin's (301 Nehoiden St., Needham); Delegation ReportBack to the Church: March 10, 11:30 am, Linden Hall. Please plan to join us!

Dear Friends of the Congregational Church of Needham,

Even though God called on December 1, 2018 to tell me (us) that no thank you notes are necessary, God did suggest that I write just one to all of you.

As I ponder the last few months, there are so many things I am grateful for and so many people I need to thank.

I am grateful and I thank you for:

- awesome lunches and talking walks
- office visits and little remembrances left on my desk
- for thoughtful cards and encouraging words
- for funny songs and meaningful gifts
- for songs composed and music shared
- for your generosity and kindness
- for hugs and well wishes
- for a great party celebrating the good times

Thank you for the many good ways we celebrated my ministry together. I will indeed keep all these things in my heart.

I wish you all the best as the new year begins. May God's peace, love, and joy be always with you.

Gratefully yours, Heike

**FOCUS**

Contributions are welcome. Please submit materials by e-mail to [office@needhamucc.org](mailto:office@needhamucc.org).

**February issue deadline: Wed., Jan. 23rd**

Rev. John MacIver Gage  
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Rev. Maddie Foster  
CE & Youth Director  
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To provide feedback about any aspect of the church, email [feedback@needhamucc.org](mailto:feedback@needhamucc.org)

## ENVIRONMENTAL MINISTRIES TEAM NEWS

...EARTH STEWARDSHIP FOR OUR LIVES TODAY...

### HOW ABOUT MAKING ELIMINATION OF PLASTIC IN YOUR LIFE A NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION

#### Facts about the Environment and Plastic:

- Conservative studies estimate over 8 million tons of plastic are dumped into the ocean annually. Plastic can take hundreds or even thousands of years to fully decompose. After some time, plastic will decay into smaller fragments of itself forming microplastics, small pieces no more than 5 millimeters (about ¼ inch) in length.
- Microbeads, a type of plastic, are very tiny pieces of manufactured polyethylene plastic that are added as exfoliants to health products, such as cleansers and beauty products. These pass easily through water filtration systems and end up in oceans and the Great Lakes posing a threat to aquatic life. Over 70% of deep-sea fish have ingested plastics.
- Plastics are showing up in foods and drink. For example, when bottled water is held in a plastic container, the plastic molecules leach into the water.
- Plastics contain endocrine-disrupting chemicals that interfere with the balance of hormones in the body. Even BPA-free containers can leach chemicals into food.
- France and Kenya are phasing out single use plastics by banning use of plastic cups and plates.

#### WAYS TO REDUCE PLASTIC:

- Shop at a local farmer's market, bringing you own

produce bags

- Use reusable shopping bags for all shopping
- Buy boxed items instead of plastic bottles
- Give up gum as it is made from synthetic rubber, which is chemically similar to a plastic
- Avoid frozen meals as all come in plastic
- Bring your own container for restaurant takeout or leftovers
- Give up bottled water permanently. Carry a stainless steel travel mug and/or water bottle
- Say no to the middle plastic table in a pizza box
- Use a stainless steel or bamboo straw, if any straw is necessary.
- Use a razor with replaceable blades instead of a plastic disposable razor
- Cook at home more, using primary ingredients
- Put pressure on manufacturers to reduce their use of plastics
- Support a plastic bag tax or ban in your community
- Purchase clothing made from natural materials. The largest proportion of microplastics in the ocean, 35%, comes from synthetic textiles. When you wash clothing made from polyester, Lycra, spandex, fleece or nylon, millions of microfibers per wash come loose and end up in the wastewater. Opt for clothing made from cotton, hemp, wool and other natural fibers.

The Environmental Ministry Team is sponsoring the church coffee hour on **January 13th**. You can get more information at that time. Free Needham reusable shopping bags and produce bags will be given out!

## FELLOWSHIP & ADULT ED

### WELCOME BRUNCH WITH REV. JOHN

**11:30am, Jan. 6**

Please attend the Welcome Brunch on January 6 immediately following the worship service. Remember to wear your name tags in the coming months so Rev. John can begin to put names to faces.

### ANNUAL HEARING AND ANNUAL MEETING

**11:30am, Sun., Jan. 20 & 27**

We will review the 2019 budget and answer questions at the Hearing on 1/20. Our Annual Meeting is on 1/27 immediately following Worship in the Sanctuary. Childcare will be available.

### COMMUNITY DINNERS

**6-7pm, Jan. 8, Feb. 5, March 5**

Dinners coincide with monthly Baby Basics Diaper distribution. Jan. 8th, due to the changed date, we will be cooking dinner and handing it out pre-packaged to our Baby Basics Families. Please contact Diana Conroy (conroyjd@rcn.com) if you are interested in helping out.

### THURSDAY LUNCHESES

**Noon -1pm, Jan. 3, Feb. 7, March 7**

Our monthly luncheons will be held on first Thursdays of every month at 12 noon in the Library. All are welcome - bring your friends and neighbors!

### CANCER SUPPORT GROUP

**Mondays 9:00-10:30am**

Cancer Support Group meets on Monday mornings at 9am in the Reception Room. We meet every Monday except on holiday Mondays or school vacations. Come, if you need an extra hug or prayer said for yourself or a family member.

### MEDITATION GROUP

**11:30am, Jan. 13 & 27**

The meditation/mindfulness group will meet twice each month after Worship. The group is open to everyone and will explore various types of meditation practice, including mindfulness. If you have any questions, feel free to call or email Sue Findlay, 781-455-8056; sgfindlay1@gmail.com



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of Needham UCC

## Men's Fellowship Breakfast, Sunday, Jan. 20th

On Sunday, 1/20, the Men's Fellowship Breakfast will welcome all church men to breakfast.

The Men's Breakfast brings men of all ages and persuasions together in the Library on the 3rd Sunday of the month before worship in honest and lively discussion touching our faith and our lives in today's complex world. We welcome men of all ages and accommodate those with scheduling challenges. Arrive at 8:15 AM for fellowship and breakfast or by 9:00 AM for the discussion.

Contact: John Baldwin ([jsbaldwin@comcast.net](mailto:jsbaldwin@comcast.net)) or Rob Dunlavey ([rob@robd.com](mailto:rob@robd.com)) for more information.



Sign up to provide yummy treats for coffee hour! You can

- use this opportunity to celebrate someone's birthday, anniversary or honor a person in your family or an occasion. Your sponsorship will be mentioned in the Sunday bulletin.
- Sign-up online at <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10c0844a8aa23a2fd0-coffee> or
- simply call the office at 781-444-2510.

## THURSDAY SOUP LUNCHESES!

Our tradition of Thursday soup lunches will continue with our first lunch of the year on Thursday, January 3rd at Noon in the Library.

All are welcome! Bring your friends!

address

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