



ON PENTECOST

The festival of Pentecost is that day in the church we set aside to focus on the church's experience of God in the work of the Holy Spirit. In the Pentecost story itself in the book of Acts, the Spirit's movement is marked by a "sound like the rush of a mighty wind," "divided tongues, as of fire," and the gift of divinely inspired communication, "as in the native language of each." With the Spirit's inspiration, Jesus' disciples, still captive to fear and anxiety, are liberated at last and sent out into the world to become apostles, bold bearers of God's Gospel of justice, peace, and compassion.

To these classic images of the Spirit – wind, fire, and breath – we add another, remembering how, at Jesus' baptism by John in the River Jordan, the Holy Spirit descended on him, "like a dove."

Are you a bird-watcher? Have you ever just sat and watched birds in the sky, either alone or in flocks or even in those massive wheeling formations called murmurations? Have you ever come face to face with a giant tom turkey in your backyard? Have you ever been still enough to have a bird alight on your hand? If you answered yes to any of these, then you know how strange and alien birds can seem, little dinosaurs caught out of time, obeying their own rules, listening to and making their own music, even defying the

laws of gravity. Small wonder that people in the past considered birds messages and messengers of the divine.

And how appropriate then to imagine the Holy Spirit as a bird, wild and untamed, alien and beautiful, to remember that God is all those things, too, even as God is also loving and comfortable and close to our hearts. It's good to be reminded that we cannot keep God in a cage, even a gilded one, without losing that essential otherness, that freedom that makes God God. At Pentecost we receive again the blessing of knowing we are not God, that, as God's Own Self reminded Moses from the burning bush: God will be who God will be, God will love whom God will love. And God will move and change what God will move and change – Thanks be to God!

Appropriately then, our Pentecost worship on Sunday, June 9 @ 10am will be a little bit wild and full of surprises. And we'll be blessed, too, to hear the testimony of those young people who have been engaged in the confirmation class this spring with Rev. Maddie and their mentors, contemplating the past, present, and future of our faith and discerning their place in it. Come join in blessing them in this holy time of transition so that, like Jesus, they may receive the witness of the Spirit reminding them they are beloved children of God, in whom God is well pleased.

Peace, Rev. John



The Parish Care Team is now **The Prayer and Care Team**

Caring for one another, being present to one another in all the messiness of life, the joys and concerns, the anxieties and thanksgivings, is a big part of how we do church together, how we are church with and for one another. And while the pastoral care ordained ministries like Rev. Maddie and I provide is important, especially in times of crisis, caring for the members of our community is something we all are called to do as Christians day in and day out.

To help facilitate this ministry, the parish care team that formed during last year's ministerial transition is transitioning themselves and becoming the Prayer and Care Team. I am working with them to create an on-going prayer list for our congregation to help us remember those who ask to be remembered in prayer in Sunday worship and throughout the week.

It is my hope that this will help keep us connected, particularly as the church moves into our more scattered summer mode.

If you have a prayer request – one of those personal joys or concerns, anxieties or thanksgivings – you'd like to share, either just with me, with the Prayer and Care Team, or with the wider congregation (that decision is up to you), all you have to do is call the church office at 781.444.2510 or call me directly at 512.431.9111 or send an email to prayerandcareteam@needhamucc.org and we'll follow up from there.

Note: Please do not ask to put somebody on the public prayer list without getting their explicit permission first! This is very important: Their story is their own, and the decision about whether or how to share is up to them. That is part of their journey with God, and no matter how well intentioned our desire to help may be, we need to respect their choices.

Guatemala Servathon - A Big Thank You

A special "thank you" to all who generously contributed to our annual 'Servathon' community-service fundraiser, including those who pledged to sponsor a worker and those who did the work. The pledges of approximately \$5,400 will support our sister projects and education in Santa María Tzejá.

The lively group of workers split into teams - one doing projects around the church, another volunteering for Mass Horticulture at Elm Bank, and one cleaning up around the Needham Junction train station. At the church, we washed many windows, inside and out, moved the raised garden beds closer to the parking lot doors, and helped to clean out the kitchen next door. Elm Bank activities centered around getting the gardens ready for spring. Yet another group kept us all well fed, as we shared two good meals. What a fun and productive day for each of us and a wonderful contribution to our partner village!

Guatemala Yard Sale News!

The Guatemala Yard Sale on May 18th was a huge success by every measure. It was blessed with the most beautiful Saturday in recent memory, bringing out hundreds of shoppers and allowing us to raise \$5,886 (and counting!) for education in Santa María Tzejá! This is 'top 5' or better in the 29 years of the yard sale. Beyond the funds raised, we celebrate the experience we all shared of a truly joyful day of community spirit and fellowship, while also fostering the environmentally responsible reuse



of so many items. Many thanks to the people who donated and shopped at the yard sale, with special gratitude to the amazing group of 50 volunteers who worked during the set-up week and at the yard sale, including Nora and Eric Slosser with their lemonade/cookie stand, and our gracious and ever-patient yard sale hosts, Caryl and Dave Johnson.



Partner-Family Letters Due June 9th for July/August Delegation

As the 'August' delegation is leaving a week early this year (July 31st), please write your partner-family (or scholarship) letter by June 9th, before you are lured away by summer plans. Your family in Santa María Tzejá is always thrilled to hear how you are and what is happening here in Needham. As our volunteer translators need 4-5 weeks to convert your English letters to Spanish, please send your letter ASAP to: davebjohnson77@gmail.com. Thanks.

And please plan to join us for our Send-Off gathering on Tuesday, July 30 from 7 to 8 pm at the Johnson's, 505 Great Plain Ave. The Reportback on our travels will be Sunday, September 22 after the church service at 11:30 am in Linden Hall.

February 2020 Delegation Sign-Up:

It's not too early to sign up for the February 12-23, 2020 delegation, since the delegation will be finalized and airline tickets will be purchased in late September. Sign-ups are first come/first served, so please contact co-leaders Brenda Metzler or Fred Moder with your interest or questions: bmetzler7@verizon.net; or fmoder@verizon.net. Please consider joining Brenda and Fred on this special delegation, their last trip as February delegation co-leaders.



FOCUS

Contributions are welcome. Please submit materials by e-mail to office@needhamucc.org.

July issue deadline:
Mon., June 24th

Rev. John MacIver Gage
Senior Minister
revjohn@needhamucc.org

Rev. Maddie Foster
CE & Youth Director
revmaddie@needhamucc.org

Valerie Becker
Music Director
musicdirector@needhamucc.org

Danielle Jurdan
Administrator
office@needhamucc.org

Cindy Sullivan
Office Assist & Bookkeeper
office2@needhamucc.org

Rev. Dr. Paul Clayton
Pastor Emeritus

The Church Board
board@needhamucc.org

Jackie Allen, Moderator
moderator@needhamucc.org

The Deacons
Sue Cotton, Chair
emaildeacons@needhamucc.org

Pastoral Relations
Committee
prc@needhamucc.org

To provide feedback about any aspect of the church, email feedback@needhamucc.org



OPEN AND AFFIRMING
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Open and Affirming Ministry News

KEEPING VIGIL FOR SEPARATED FAMILIES

The Wednesday Witness vigils to support immigrant families experiencing separation are on-going on the Needham Town Common on Wednesdays 5:30-6:00pm. To receive notices about these and related events, news about family separation, and actions you can take (such as writing to legislators), please email Georgina Arietta-Ruetenik at georgina@somaptandrehab.com and get on the email list.



HEY, CHURCH, LET'S MARCH IN BOSTON PRIDE JUNE 8

The annual Boston LGBTQ Pride celebration will happen on Saturday, June 8. This is the 50th anniversary of the Stonewall Riots, considered to be the start of the modern LGBTQ movement. The day includes Pride Worship Service at Old South Church in Boston at 11am, a spirit-filled 2-mile Pride Parade through Boston in the afternoon, and a Pride Festival at City Hall Plaza. The day is full of celebration, music, chanting and dancing, and pride in one's identity and one's community. It is also a reminder that safety and pride are not yet reality for everyone, even in Massachusetts.

We will walk with the Mass Conference UCC marching group, a collection of about 100 people from 25 ONA churches. It is a fantastic experience that sends the message that there are churches that offer God's love to every person. Sign up on the ONA bulletin Board or email Kathie Carpenter at kacarp@comcast.net. Allies and children welcome! Rev. John has agreed to lead the chants and songs this year, so let's help him enjoy his first Boston Pride. You'll find yourself chanting...

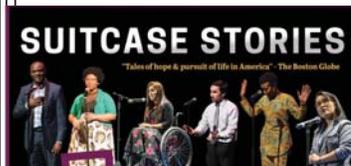
No matter who you are
No matter what you do,
You're welcome in our churches,
'Cause God loves you



ONA35 - CELEBRATE - AGITATE - ACTIVATE

You are invited to "ONA35," a celebration of the 35th anniversary of Open and Affirming in Massachusetts, on Saturday, June 15, at the Plymouth Church UCC in Framingham. The Rev. DaVita McCallister, pastor of First Church Somerville, and the Rev. Louis J. Mitchell, executive director of Transfaith, will be featured speakers. The day will include worship, music and mini-workshops on various justice topics. Register at macucc.org/lgbt. The event is sponsored by the ONA Ministry Team of the Mass Conference. Contact Kathie Carpenter for further information.

SUITCASE STORIES COMMUNITY SHOWCASE IN NEEDHAM ON JUNE 12TH



Suitcase Stories is a traveling live performance series that features foreign and U.S.-born residents sharing refugee and immigrant stories. The format of storytelling in a theatrical setting is especially suited to these powerful tales of real-life experience.

Needham will be hosting Suitcase Stories on **Wednesday, June 12, 7:30pm at Temple Beth Shalom, 670 Highland Avenue**. Come hear local residents, including Georgina Arrieta-Ruetenik, and professional storytellers share their inspiring refugee and immigration stories. Proceeds from the performance help support refugees and immigrants participating in resettlement, education, employment, and citizenship programs through the International Institute of New England. Tickets are \$15 and can be purchased through Eventbrite at <https://eventbrite.com/e/60287058214>

The ONA ministry team/Congregational Church of Needham UCC is a supporting partner of this event and our Outreach committee has generously purchased a block of tickets for members of our church. Questions or for more information regarding the event, please feel free to contact Cheryl Aglio-Girelli at agirelli@rcn.com.

Volunteer for Suitcase Stories

Folks can volunteer to bake (buy) desserts (specifics included), help check in attendees who have pre-paid for the event and also sell tickets to those paying at the door, as well as ushers/ greeters who will greet audience members, hand out programs and make sure that everyone has a seat (and perhaps help to display the refreshments before the end of the story tellers.)

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C054AADA92EA02-volunteer>



FAMILY PROMISE

3 Exciting Family Promise Opportunities-We are delighted to announce that our church will be hosting a Family Promise Volunteer Training Tuesday, June 4 from 7:00-8:30PM in the reception room.

We also have been invited to visit the Day Center for a Tour and Presentation on Wednesday June 12 at 1:30. Carpoolers can plan to leave from the church at 1PM. We'll return by 3:30.

These are wonderful opportunities for teens and families exploring summer Community Service

volunteer options and for those interested in joining our upcoming early summer Support Weeks at Fisk Methodist Natick June 16-23 and First Congregational Church in Natick Center June 23-30.

Volunteer opportunities include meal prep, dinner hosting, Day Center office assistance, volunteer and paid babysitting, and sharing skills such as tutoring, a musical instrument, or art.

For more information on the Volunteer Training, Family Promise volunteer opportunities or to be connected with current FP volunteers within our church please contact Susan Kirk susanckirk@comcast.net 781 363-1810

FELLOWSHIP & ADULT ED

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.

COMMUNITY DINNERS 6-7pm, June 4, July 2, Aug. 6

Dinners coincide with monthly Baby Basics Diaper distribution. Volunteers are invited to join in our effort to provide a healthy dinner for our guests and members of the church. As a volunteer you will help with set up, cooking, serving, visiting, eating and cleaning up. Contact Diana Conroy (conroyjd@rcn.com) if you are interested in helping out.

IN LIGHT OF EASTER: FACING END OF LIFE ISSUES IN FAITH 11:30am, June 2 & 9

Rev. John is hosting a speaker series over this Easter season to help us talk frankly and faithfully about very concrete end of life issues; funerary needs, hospice services, legal issues (like advance directives), and financial planning and planned giving. We hope you will make plans to join us for these meaningful and useful conversations.

THURSDAY LUNCHES Noon -1pm, June 6 & Sept. 5

Thursday Soup Lunches will resume the first Thursday of September. Everyone is welcome - church members and friends!

ENVIRONMENTAL MINISTRIES TEAM NEWS

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

GREEN TIP

The Environmental Working Group has put out a guide for families on how to avoid PFAS (per - and polyfluoroalkyl substances). PFAS are a group of chemicals that have been used in products with water, grease and stain repellent properties for decades. They have also been used in many consumer goods and industrial applications. PFAS are found in Teflon products, stain repellents for carpeting and furniture, such as Scotchguard and Stainmaster, waterproofing products for clothing, such as Gore-tex and Polartec, microwave popcorn bags, many fast food wrappers, Oral B Glide dental floss.

These chemicals persist in the environment and in the human body (CDC says PFAS has been detected in the blood of 98 percent of the U.S. population) The CDC says they have been linked to changes in growth, learning and behavior of infants and children, reduced fertility in women, hormone disruptions, increased cholesterol levels, changes in immune function and increased cancer risk.

To avoid these chemicals, choose stainless steel or cast iron pans, be wary of all fabrics labeled stain or water repellent, skip optional stain repellent treatments on new carpets and furniture, choose dental floss such as Tom's of Maine and other types found at Whole Foods, pop popcorn the old fashioned way - on the stove top! For more information, check out the Environmental Working Group's tip sheet.

<https://static.ewg.org/ewg-tip-sheets/EWG-AvoidingPFCs.pdf>



CHILDREN AND YOUTH

CURRENT SUNDAY SCHOOL UNIT: PLANTING PEACE

Kids of all ages are currently learning about Planting Peace in Sunday School! After Children's Circle we head to the chapel to sing, pray, and think about our Bible stories together - from the stories of God creating to the parables of the Sower and the Mustard Seed to reflecting on the church as a garden. After we hear our story, we head to our reflections stations where we will plant a pollinator garden, engage in activities based on the week's story, use our imagination, and sing together. Kids move between stations and get a chance to do each activity. When church is over, we gather together for a prayer and blessing. Parents are welcome to join us in chapel and in the garden - sign up to volunteer Sunday, May 26, June 9, or June 16 by emailing RevMaddie@NeedhamUCC.org (note: our largest need is on Sunday, June 9).

JUNE

Sunday, June 2
9am - Youth Band practice
10am - Worship, Youth Sunday & Communion, children remain in worship
3pm - Youth Group

Friday, June 7
Talent Show, set up 5:30; show 6:30-8:30

Sunday, June 9
10am - Worship, Confirmation & Pentecost, children begin in sanctuary
3pm - Youth Group

Sunday, June 16
10am - Worship, children begin in sanctuary

Sunday, June 23
10am - Worship, children begin in sanctuary

Sunday, June 30
Worship, led by Mission Trip students, children remain in worship

Vacation Bible School

SEA & BELIEVE

Splash into the living water!

Mon. 8/26 - Fri. 8/30

For more info and to register online:

NeedhamUCC.org/VBS

The Congregational Church of Needham, UCC
1154 Great Plain Ave. | Needham, MA 02492
www.needhamucc.org | 781-444-2510



TALENT SHOW: FRIDAY, JUNE 7, 6:30-8:30 PM

Performers of all ages and all talents are needed to fill our talent show! The talent show will be a free fellowship event with a snack bar (hot dogs, popcorn, and more!) available as a fundraiser for our Mission Trip to Portland, ME at the end of June.

If you would like to participate, please email me at RevMaddie@NeedhamUCC.org with the talent you'd like to share. 3-5 minutes per performer; if performing a musical number please include song and artist with your signup!



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office@needhamucc.org

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needhamucc.org

On the twitter
[@needhamucc](https://twitter.com/needhamucc)

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Congregational Church
of Needham UCC

Men's Fellowship Breakfast, Sunday, June 16

On Sunday, 6/16, 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) or Rob Dunlavey (rob@robd.com) for more information.



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