



HAPPY EASTER, FRIENDS!

“But wait,” you say, “That’s a bit late. Easter was a couple of Sundays ago.”



To which I would answer, “You’re right. Easter Sunday has come and gone, but the season of Easter lasts for 50 days, until Pentecost Sunday, June 9 this year. So we get to celebrate love’s triumph over death— and the fear of death— and re-affirm our

confidence in God’s grace in life and in death for a while longer now.”

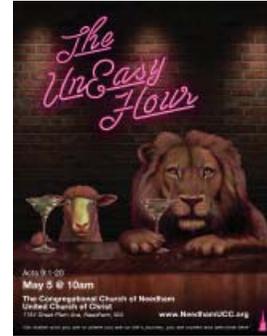
Toward that end, we’re hosting a speaker series over this Easter season to help us talk frankly and faithfully about very concrete end of life issues, beginning THIS SUNDAY, May 5 @ 11:30am in the chapel, when we’ll host Skip Eaton from Eaton Funeral Homes. Eaton’s has been serving the funerary needs of the Needham community for more than 200 years, and Skip will share his unique perspective on planning ahead, what a funeral director does (and doesn’t do), and ways we can work with them to prepare for own passing and the passing of our loved ones.

Other conversations in the series will include hospice services, legal issues (like advance directives), and financial planning and planned giving. Again, these are not morbid topics, particularly in light of our Easter proclamation, but opportunities to embrace abundant living all the way to the end of our lives. I hope you will make plans to join us for these meaningful and useful conversations. After all, death is something we will all have to deal with and hope to do with grace.

On the other end of the spectrum of life, we are delighted to be celebrating the baptism of Christina Hanson, daughter of Carl and Susan Hanson, in worship this Sunday. Come share in this affirmation of love, grace, and new life!

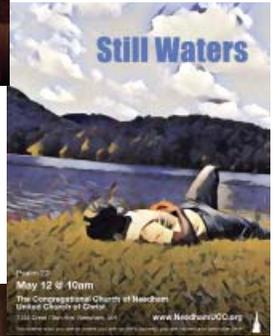
Peace,
Rev. John

Here are my upcoming sermons for the month of May:



Acts 9:1-20

Psalm 23



Acts 11:1-18

Revelation 21:10-22:5



DEACON’S UPDATE



Holy week was a busy time for many of us in the church. The Deacons under the direction of Sue Turner organized a soup dinner where over 50 people attended. Following dinner there was a Maundy Thursday service with communion, and washing of the feet.

On Easter Sunday, over 300 people attended the

service, and the Deacons (including some former deacons) served communion in the pews with compostable wine cups.

Looking ahead, Deacons will be hosting the Confirmation brunch. If you would like to share any ideas with the Deacons, the meetings are the 2nd Wednesday of the month at 7:00 in the library. Feel free to contact any of us in person or through email - emaildeacons@needhamucc.org.

COMING UP! 29th Annual Guatemala Yard Sale -- Sat., May 18th, 9 am - 2 pm, 505 Great Plain Ave.

Don't miss this opportunity to DONATE your items, to VOLUNTEER, and to SHOP at one of Needham's largest yard sales! Please join us in this fun, community-building activity that offers your unwanted 'treasures' a new life, supports the environment, and raises funds for education in Santa María Tzejá!

Donations Wanted: Items in clean, working condition (no clothing), including: Kitchen and household items, collectible or vintage items, children's gear, toys, current sports equipment, puzzles and games, jewelry, artwork, electronics (but no TV's/computers), books/DVD's, bicycles, tools, garden supplies, outdoor furniture, or small indoor furniture items. (If in doubt, call Brenda first.)



Drop-Off Your Items: beginning at 6:00 pm (no earlier), Sunday, May 12th thru Noon, Friday, May 17th at Dave and Caryl Johnson's garage (505 Great Plain). (Donate early in the week to make sure we have space.) If the site is unattended, please lift the left-side garage door and put donations inside. For questions or to volunteer, please contact Brenda Metzler at: bmetzler7@verizon.net or (781) 449-5696. Thank you, and please join us for the sale on May 18th. You won't be disappointed!

LAST CALL: Sign-Ups for August Delegation to Guatemala (7/31 - 8/11)

The August delegation to our sister village of Santa María Tzejá

leaves Needham Wednesday, July 31st and returns August 11, 2019. If interested, please contact co-leaders



Caryl Johnson: carylgjohnson@gmail.com; or Alan Clayton-Matthews: a.clayton-matthews@neu.edu . Note: Airline tickets will be purchased in May, so don't delay.

Upcoming Transition in Delegation Leadership: Requesting Your Engagement

As mentioned in last month's Focus, the current co-leaders for both the February and August delegations (Brenda, Fred, Caryl, and Alan) will be stepping down from leading delegations after the August 2020 delegation. Each of us feels very blessed to have been able to lead multiple delegations over the years (from 5 to 18 delegations each!), but we now need for others to fill our well-worn shoes. We have one experienced person who hopes to co-lead the August delegations (Bill Garrett), but we need 2-3 others to be able to maintain two delegations per year. So we prayerfully ask that you consider how you may be called to help to sustain these delegations, to allow us to continue to offer this transformational opportunity to our youth and adults.

Each of the current leaders took a pretty bold leap of faith, when Clark and Kay asked for our help in continuing delegations. We had no assurance that we'd be good at it, but the need was compelling, so we took the risk, trusting that a higher power would be in it with us. Clark and Kay were excellent mentors, and hopefully the current delegation leaders will be as well. Please consider exploring this possibility with us, or simply join us on a delegation to see why this 32-year-old delegation tradition still has something special to offer both sides of the partnership. Thank you. Brenda Metzler

FOCUS

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

June issue deadline: Thurs., May 23rd

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

all packed!!

On Sunday April 28th over 80 adults and kids from our church and wider Needham community came together in Fellowship Hall to support the Outreach Packathon Event. As we listened to music, provided by Rev. John, and chatted with each other we measured, mixed, sealed and packed our way to over 40 boxes filled with 1,500 food packets-- enough to make 10,000 nutritious meals!

The Outreach Team sends a heartfelt **thank-you** to everyone who together packed meals for families in need.



The day was both fun and inspiring and we hope you can join us again for our next event.

2019 WOMEN'S RETREAT: FINDING JOY

Who: Women of all ages.

When: Friday, May 10 (starting at 4:30 or later) through Saturday, May, 11 (ending by 2:30).

Where: Craigville Retreat Center, Craigville, MA (Cape Cod)

Why: Change of pace, opportunity to get to know other women, relaxation, spiritual reflection, singing, playing, creating, walking on the beach -- and someone else makes the meals!



How: Sign up by writing your name on the sign-up sheet by the big kitchen, OR email Deb Baldwin (dhdaldwin@comcast.net) or Janet Jankowiak (janetjankowiak@comcast.net).

The cost is \$110.00, for three meals and a place to stay overnight. Please make checks out to Congregational Church of Needham, with "Women's Retreat" in the memo line. Leave them in the Women's Retreat mailbox in the copy room, or give to Deb Baldwin or Janet Jankowiak. If the cost deters you, please speak with Rev. Maddie, Janet or Deb. We hope to see you at the retreat!



Open and Affirming Ministry News

STONEWALL 50 AND BOSTON PRIDE

This June marks the 50th anniversary of the Stonewall Riots, events that are considered to be the start of the modern LGBTQ movement. That is the reason that many states hold LGBTQ Pride activities in June each year.

The annual Boston LGBTQ Pride celebration will happen on Saturday, June 8.



The day includes Pride Worship Services at several churches including Old South Church in Boston, a glorious Pride Parade through Boston, and a Pride Festival at City Hall Plaza. The one and a half mile parade begins at noon. The day is full of celebration and pride in oneself, one's identity and one's community. It is also a reminder that safety and pride is not yet reality for everyone.

For many years, members of our church participated in Pride, but participation has dwindled in recent years. Let's take our new energy and hope and walk with the Mass Conference UCC 100-strong marching group. It is a fantastic experience that sends the message that churches do offer God's love to every person. Sign-ups will be on the ONA bulletin Board. Let's make a difference. Allies and children welcome! Rumor is that Rev. John may be leading some chants and songs, so let's help him enjoy Boston Pride.

ONA35 - CELEBRATE - AGITATE - ACTIVATE

The MA Conference UCC will celebrate "ONA35," the 35th anniversary of the nation's first ONA Resolution on Saturday,



June 15, 2019. The ONA resolution was adopted by the Annual Meeting of the Conference in June 1984. The Rev. DaVita McCallister of First Church Somerville and the Rev. Louis J. Mitchell of Transfaith will be featured speakers. More information to come. The event is sponsored by the ONA Ministry Team of the Mass Conference.

ENVIRONMENTAL MINISTRIES TEAM NEWS

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

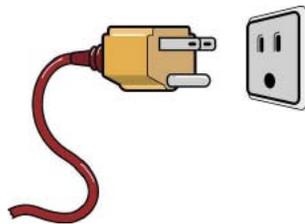
The Environmental Ministry Team thanks church members for supporting our single-use plastic collection for Lent. What is happening to the over 40 pounds of plastic we have collected? We'll take 50% to our local grocer where there are receptacles available. The grocer sees that the plastic is sent to a recycler. The other 50% of the single-use plastics we collected will be crocheted into mats for homeless in our area. We are working with an area artist who will help us create these useful mats for our neighbors.

This is just the beginning of ways you can help save our planet Earth. We are past thinking about the next steps it is a time for action. Listed below are many opportunities you can do to create a clean green place for all of Earth's species.

Earth Day Action Items

Things you can do:

- Unplug chargers from wall sockets. They draw electricity when not in use.
- Turn out your lights when you leave your house.
- Take reusable containers to store to buy grocer items in bulk.
- Take shorter showers.
- Walk or ride a bike when feasible instead of taking car.
- Make your own yogurt from local milk in returnable glass bottles.
- Use your local library for books and materials.
- Read Jim Antal's book, Climate Church, Climate World.
- Plant native species or a pollinator garden.
- Reduce your red meat consumption. Purchase meat from local farms.
- Leave dead plants and leaves in some flower beds until spring to promote native insects.
- Go organic for your lawn. Lawn care companies have organic programs.
- Take the commuter rail to Boston for work or for fun!
- Hang laundry outside in warmer weather and in the basement in winter.
- Buy cut flowers only in season from local farms and markets.
- Switch to LED light bulbs.
- Switch to warm LED bulbs for outdoors and set on motion detector timers (dark sky compliant).
- Shop at local Farmer's Markets.
- Shop with reusable bags and reusable produce bags.
- Use sustainable food storage like Bees Wrap (made in VT) instead of plastic wrap.
- Use church plates and flatware for church functions.
- Use steel or bamboo straws.



Compost at home in your yard or with a compost company.

Install solar panels – next time you shingle your roof put solar panels up.

Consider electric or hybrids when buying your next car.

Attend a Repair Café in Wellesley (go to Sustainable Wellesley website).

Join a CSA (Community Supported Agriculture).

Schedule a free energy audit of your home with Mass Save – they will give you LEDs! (<https://www.masssave.com/>)

Environmental Justice Sites:

Join the UCC Environmental Justice email list for "The Pollinator" a biweekly newsletter.

Join Mass Audubon (<https://www.massaudubon.org/>)

Join the Trustees of Reservations (<http://www.thetrustees.org/>)

Join sustainable Wellesley (<http://www.sustainablewellesley.com/>)

Join Green Needham Collaborative (<https://www.greenneedham.org/blog/>)

Join the Environmental Working group (<https://www.ewg.org/>)

Join MASS Climate Action (<https://www.massclimateaction.org/>)

Join Juliana v. United States; a youth-led climate group (www.joinjuliana.org)

Join Needham Free Cycle to pass along items you no longer need <https://groups.freecycle.org/group/NeedhamMA/posts/all>.

CSA - Community Supported Agriculture:

Needham Community Farm

The Neighborhood Farm –

Wayland and Needham

Powisset Farm – Dover

Natick Community Organic Farm

Waltham Fields Community

Farm

Land's Sake – Weston

Stearns Farm – Framingham

Chris Yoder – Dover. Cyoder12002@yahoo.com,

\$600.00 for a full share



Farmer's Markets:

Needham Farmer's Market – Sunday 12-4, June 9-Oct 27. Neighborhood Farm seedlings May 26 and June 2.

Dedham Farmer's Market – Wednesdays 2-6 p.m., June 19 – Oct 30. 670 High Street.

Natick Farmer's Market – Saturdays 9:00-1:00 year-round. Natick Common.

Newton Farmer's Market – Tuesdays 1:30-6:00, July 9 – Oct. 22, Cold Spring Park

Saturdays 9:30 – 12:30, June 22- Oct. 5, Elm Street.

FAMILY PROMISE



What a Team! What a morning! Our Congregational Church of Needham Team (team members Rick Devereux and Cheryl AG couldn't be there day of but raised funds!) was among the 65 other teams who joined in the

- Walk to End Homelessness on Saturday, April 6 to benefit the programs of Family Promise Metrowest, a nonprofit dedicated to helping families facing homelessness. Over 800 people came out to raise awareness and funding for programs that provide shelter, meals, job assistance, education, and professional case management. It was a great day walking with old friends and new, and our team raised over \$2500.00! We couldn't have done it without such wonderful support from our church community and others.
- A heartfelt thank you to all who sponsored our walkers and to those who walked!

Family Promise uses a simple approach of mobilizing existing community resources to serve families who are without a home. Host congregations furnish safe, overnight lodging and meals, while families receive intensive professional support to regain their sustainability at the Day Center in Natick. The Needham Congregational Church is among the 50 network congregations that are the foundation of Family Promise's many initiatives. Today, 3,000 volunteers from across civic organizations, businesses, schools, and the community at large share their unique skills, experiences, and resources to create a vast network of support that transforms the lives of families and ensures their future success.

Volunteer trainings are available before our next Support Weeks June 17-23 and June 23-29. For more information on how you can become involved with this special, local organization that does so much for families facing homeless please contact Susan Kirk susanckirk@comcast.net or visit www.familypromisemetrowest.org.

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, May 7, June 4, July 2

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.

THURSDAY LUNCHESES Noon -1pm, May 2, June 6

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

MINDFULNESS BOOK GROUP 7pm, May 13

The Meditation Mindfulness group is meeting to continue discussing "The Book of Joy" by the Dalai

Lama and Archbishop Desmond Tutu. Open to all!

IN LIGHT OF EASTER: FACING END OF LIFE ISSUES IN FAITH 11:30am, May 5 & 19, 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.

MEDITATION GROUP 11:30am, May 12 & 26, June 9 & 23

The meditation/mindfulness group meets twice each month after Worship in the Chapel. 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

WOMEN'S RETREAT Friday, May 10 & Saturday, May 11 Craigville Conference Center

Come for a change of pace, the opportunity to get to know other women, relaxation, spiritual reflection, singing, playing, creating, walking on the beach -- and someone else makes the meals!

THIS MONTH IN SUNDAY SCHOOL AND YOUTH GROUP!

Thursday, May 2:

Confirmation class, 6-8 PM, library

Sunday, May 5:

First Formal Communion, children remain in worship

Youth Group Laser Tag - RSVP REQUIRED BY 4/30, Carpool drivers needed

Tuesday, May 7:

Confirmation Class prepares and serves Community Dinner, kitchen & Linden Hall

Thursday, May 9:

Confirmation class, 6-8 PM, library

Friday, May 10-Saturday May 11:

City Reach for High School students, 1-2 student slots may be available if you are interested!

Sunday, May 12:

Worship, Bible Sunday (Bibles presented to Kindergarten and 4th Grade students), students begin in sanctuary
No youth group

Thursday, May 16:

Confirmation class, 6-8 PM, library

Sunday, May 19:

Worship, students begin in sanctuary
Talking to Kids about Jesus
a workshop for parents 11:30-12:15
Youth Group 3-4:30

Thursday, May 23:

EMT Mat-Making Workshop,
12:30-2:30 PM

Confirmation class, 6-8 PM, library

Sunday, May 26:

Worship, students begin in sanctuary
Youth Group, 11:30 AM - 1:00 PM
(Walking to Abbots for custard)

Thursday, May 30:

Confirmation class off-site activity

Sunday, June 2:

Youth Band practice 9 AM
Worship, Youth Sunday & Communion, children remain in worship
Youth Group, cookout, 3-4:30 PM

SUSTAIN: *An Environmental Justice Youth Mission Trip*

Registration has begun for our Summer Mission Trip to Portland, ME!

Trip Dates: Monday, June 24-Friday, June 28

Current high school students are invited to participate in this week of learning and service focused on environmental justice and earth stewardship. If you are interested in joining, please email Rev. Maddie ASAP (revmaddie@needhamucc.org) and provide your forms and deposit to hold your spot. We have 9 spots remaining. Friends from outside the church are also welcome to join.

The Mission Trip packet is available online, https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Voy_pGfsIC321Sv5SIVgvUugM7NcAiwc/view, and in print outside Rev. Maddie's office.

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!

Talking with Children:

A Workshop for Grown-Ups!

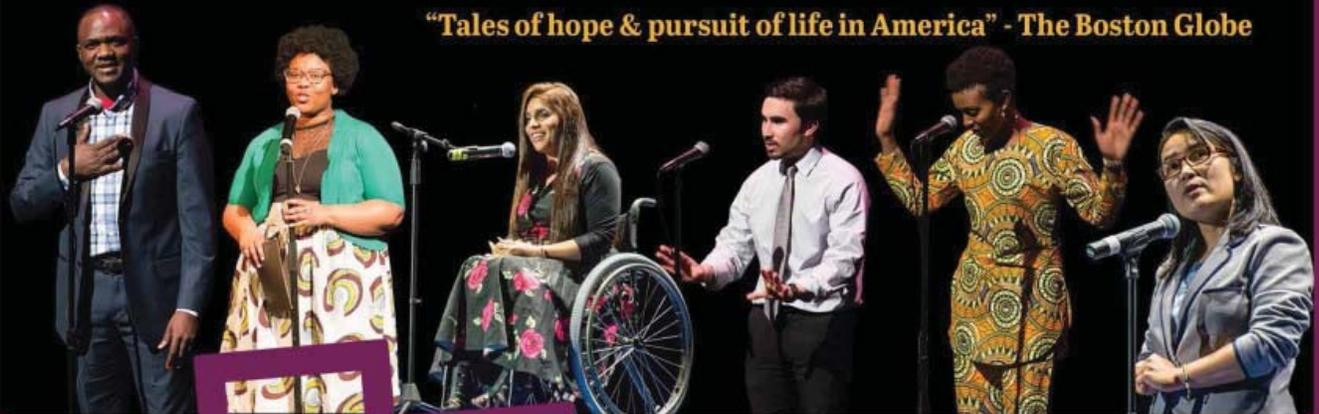


Talking with Children About JESUS:
Sunday, May 19, 11:30 AM

This forum is geared toward parents and family members with young children. We'll learn about ways to talk with children about important elements and beliefs in our Christian faith. This workshop will consist of a presentation from Rev. Maddie, a small-group activity to get our adult brains thinking creatively, and activities, prayers, and rituals to bring home to spark faithful conversation with kids.

SUITCASE STORIES

"Tales of hope & pursuit of life in America" - The Boston Globe



**SUITCASE
STORIES®**

COMMUNITY SHOWCASE

Local voices sharing global journeys

DATE & TIME:

Wednesday, June 12, 2019 at 7:30pm

LOCATION:

Temple Beth Shalom

670 Highland Ave. Needham, MA 02494

(ENTER FROM WEBSTER STREET)

MORE INFO:

Tickets at: eventbrite.com/e/60287058214



International
Institute of
New England

Supporting Partners: Resettle Together, Temple Beth Shalom / Tzedek (Social Justice), Needham Immigration Task Force, Needham Human Rights Committee, Wellesley Friends Meeting, UCC Congregational Church of Needham, League of Women Voters of Needham, CMM, First Baptist Church in Needham, Needham Diversity Initiative

