

FOCUS

NOVEMBER 2020

The Congregational
Church of Needham

Dear Friends,

As we approach Election Day this week (in the midst of a pandemic, with fires raging in the West, storms battering the Gulf, and a racial reckoning long deferred ready to boil over), I want to remind you that God is with us – not on our side, but by our side, offering us wisdom, encouragement, love that surpasses our meager human understanding, and, most of all, grace. And as church, we are called to offer one another and the world the same gifts, to stand in solidarity with the vulnerable and suffering, and to be present to one another through our confusion and pain, as in our joy.

It's in that spirit, I offer you this prayer, written by The Rev. John Will, a retired United Church of Christ pastor:

A PRAYER FOR OUR TIMES

O, Gracious and Eternal One,
We live in broken times in a broken world.
Meet us in this moment, we pray,
wherever we are,
whatever be our circumstances;
for You are indeed in the midst of us all.
Bless those whose aim is that of serving others.
Bless them in their caring.
Bless those with courage to speak truth to power.
Bless them in their daring.
Bless those with talents to make children smile.
Bless them in their sharing.
Rouse us all during these days
as disciples with a mission
announcing hope,
committing acts of love,
sharing your gift of peace.
For in truth, to You we owe our life,
to You we live our life,
to You we find meaning in life.
In these days before the election,
turbulent as they are in many ways,
we pray for: clearness of mind,
calmness of spirit,
sensitivity of heart,
a deeper delving into soul,
that we may discern that which make for
the common good,
and act accordingly.
O God, Creator, Redeemer, Sustainer,
our times are in your hands. Amen.

Peace,
Rev. John

More than a
Fairytale Faith

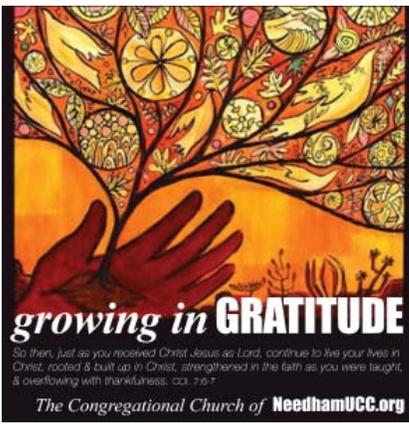
**On Earth
as it is in
Heaven**
love in life & death

All Saints' Day
Worship LIVE! Online 11/1 @ 10am
Info at www.NeedhamUCC.org

In Worship This Sunday, 11/1
All Saints Sunday

As we remember those who've gone before us through death, we'll reflect on the images of heaven we've inherited. Is it really a pearly gated community, all harps and halos? And we'll ask, How does how we think about heaven shape how we treat our time--and our neighbors--on earth?

Worship will include beautiful music from our singers, a special stewardship presentation from our youth, and an In Memoriam slide show of photos of departed loved ones who live on in our hearts and in God's love.



Grow in Gratitude with Us: Stewardship Giving 2021

On Sunday, October 25 on behalf of the Stewardship Committee, Amy Hurley announced the theme for this year's campaign, Growing in Gratitude. Amy shared, "For me, when things have been hard during my life, I often try to practice gratitude to help me get perspective and stay grounded.... Looking at all the good fortune in my life, rather than dwelling on a problem."

Gratitude runs completely counter to the "never-enough" culture of the world around us. It asks us to give thanks for everything in our lives, good or bad, that has brought us to the present moment; to receive this moment, with all its blessings and challenges, as a gift; and to look to the future with hope and commitment. With all that is happening in the world, this has definitely been a year for lots of gratitude practice.

During November, we hope to grow in gratitude by inviting you, the members of our church community, to share your appreciation for all that God has done in the past; all the ways Christ is being embodied in this present moment, even in the disruptions we're experiencing; and all the ways the Spirit is leading us into the future. In worship each Sunday until Thanksgiving, we will share a special stewardship moment, an opportunity to reflect on gratitude as we contemplate our financial pledges toward the church budget for 2021.

Last year we received pledges and gifts of nearly \$400,000 to carry on the good word and work of our church. Thank you for committing your time, talent, care and resources to the Congregational Church of Needham so generously. That's what stewardship is about. We hope you will consider making a gift this year, too. Here's how:

You should have received a stewardship letter from members Chris and Rachel Busby that includes a pledge form. These pledge forms are essential, as they let us know what sort of support we can count on and plan the church budget accordingly. You can mail in your form or drop it off in the secure mailbox outside the church office. You can contact our church administrator, Danielle Jurdan, at (781) 444-2510 or office@needhamucc.org, and she will gladly fill a pledge form out for you. You can fill out a form online on our website at www.needhamucc.org/giving. Note: If you give electronically, PLEASE go ahead and review your giving and fill out a new pledge form for 2021.

Thank you for your prayerful consideration of making a pledge to the Congregational Church of Needham. We know it's been a difficult year, and we appreciate each and every one of you who make our church such a special place to come together to worship and make the world a better place.

The Stewardship Committee comprises Rev. John Gage, Amy Hurley, Heather Salerno, and Jackie Allen.

Worship Flower Donations

If you would like to sponsor the Altar flowers for the week you can either sign up at <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0844A8AA23A2FD0-worship> or email the church office at office@needhamucc.org with 2 date choices and your dedication for the Order of Worship. Donations can be made via check or the church's paypal account on <http://www.needhamucc.org>.

FOCUS

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

January issue
deadline:
December 18th

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 & Bookeeper
office2@needhamucc.org

The Church Board
board@needhamucc.org

Judith Stewart, Moderator
moderator@needhamucc.org

The Deacons
Jim Ruetenik, Chair
emaildeacons@needhamucc.org

Pastoral Relations
Committee
prc@needhamucc.org

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

NEWS FROM THE BOARD

The Board is working diligently in a number of areas including Stewardship, Nominating, development of the budget for 2021, and negotiating an extension of the P&S agreement for 1180 Great Plain Avenue. Directors Amy Hurley and Heather Salerno have worked with Rev. John and Jackie Allen to develop the Stewardship Campaign, "Growing in Gratitude." Please reflect on the thoughtful stewardship moments presented in worship during November as you prayerfully complete your pledge form for 2021.

Directors Scott Lively and Sue Cotton as well as Deacon Sue Turner are leading the Nominating team. They are working carefully and prayerfully with a representative from each committee to find the church members who best fill positions on the Board of Directors, the Deacons, Christian Education, the Outreach Committee and the Pastoral Relations Committee. Please see the separate article on Nominating and contact Scott at nominating@needhamucc.org if you would like to serve. Participation of longtime members and newer members will help make the church stronger and

more vibrant.

The Finance team presented the third quarter report after worship on October 25 in a well-attended session and a summary of that report may be found elsewhere in this edition of FOCUS. 2020 has been a challenging year. As the Finance team works to develop the budget for 2021 they will continue to seek ways to trim expenses. Our ability to expand rental income is limited by the pandemic. Your pledges for 2021 are very important and any increase you are able to make in your pledge will help the church.

The Board is negotiating an extension of the P&S agreement for 1180 Great Plain Ave which expires October 30. The Motion for Summary Judgement sought by the buyer has a date in Superior Court in early December, after many delays due to the pandemic. The odds of the MSJ being granted are low but we should know by mid-February or early March the decision of the court.

Respectfully submitted,
Judith Stewart, Moderator
moderator@needhamucc.org

BOARD & COMMITTEE VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES!



Interested in joining a board or committee to help lead our church into the future and spend time with wonderful people? The Nomination Team is seeking nominations

for the Board of Directors, Board of Deacons, Outreach Committee, Christian Education Committee and Pastoral Relations Committee. Please contact Scott Lively if you'd like more information or to nominate yourself for a role (nominating@needhamucc.org).

In January 2021, we will be electing new members for the individuals whose terms are expiring for all of these Committees and the Boards, typically for 3-year terms.

The Church Bylaws also identify the Officers of the church. They are a Moderator, a Clerk, a Treasurer, and a Collector. Officers are elected for 1-year terms in January. For a description of the boards, committees and officer positions, please look at this section of the church website: <https://www.needhamucc.org/lay-leaders.html>.

THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS (3 year term)
Why I care about this role: "Serving as a Board member has been one of the most enriching

experiences I've had through the church. Working alongside thoughtful leaders with wonderfully varied backgrounds and perspectives to help strategically guide the direction of the church is rewarding and feels impactful." ~ Kristin Mollerus

THE DEACONS (3 year term)

Why I care about this role: "Being a member of the Board of Deacons is a special responsibility. Having a role in church leadership takes my faith to a deeper level. It is an honor to serve the congregation I love." ~ Kathie Carpenter

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION COMMITTEE (3 year term)

Why I care about this role: "Serving on the CE Committee reminds me to keep learning and growing in my understanding of God. It's fulfilling to be able to support Rev. Maddie in creating the activities and gatherings that keep our children connected to each other and to their faith." ~ Rachel Busby

OUTREACH COMMITTEE (3 year term)

Why I care about this role: "By serving on the Outreach committee, we put our beliefs into action. We review opportunities and decide which projects most fit our church's mission and beliefs. We also work to find more programs where our church members can offer their time as well as financial support." ~ Mi Herzog



From the ONA Ministry Team

OPEN AND AFFIRMING
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

TRANSGENDER DAY OF REMEMBRANCE



The annual Transgender Day of Remembrance (TDOR) memorializes individuals who have died throughout the world in the previous year because of anti-transgender hatred. Each November (on or near the 20th), the worldwide transgender community turns its attention to family, friends and loved ones lost to violence and prejudice. A tradition inspired by the Allston, MA, vigil for Rita Hester, a trans woman murdered in 1998, this day has become the worldwide rallying point for a community long under siege. Nearly all victims are trans women of color. As of mid-October 2020, 32 transgender people have been murdered in the US.

First Parish in Needham will host a Transgender Day of Remembrance again this year. We will pass on details when we get them.

HOLIDAY GIVING

It may seem early to think about this, but Christmas is on the way. The Open and Affirming Ministry Team suggests the following organizations as worthy recipients of your holiday giving:



LGBT ASYLUM TASK FORCE

Founded in June 2008, their founding goal and continuing mission is to support the basic human needs of LGBTQ+ people seeking asylum in the United States. They strive to provide/find/facilitate: housing, food, clothing, resources (ex. health care, psychological care, faith communities), cellphones (vital for contact with lawyers & family), and transportation. Donate at lgbtasylum.org



outmetrowest.org

Since 2011, OUT MetroWest has directly served more than 1,000 youth at its meetings, has conducted dozens of trainings for local schools and organizations, and has welcomed more than 200 guests at its events for LGBTQ+ families.

- Affirming LGBTQ+ identities through positive role modeling
- Challenging ableism, classism, misogyny, racism, and other systems of oppression
- Creating supportive spaces where LGBTQ+ youth can be themselves
- Respecting, embracing, and celebrating diversity
- Treating people with care and compassion

THIRD QUARTER 2020 REPORT FINANCE UPDATE

As you know, at the Annual Meeting, we adopted an operating budget, which anticipated revenues of \$655,323 inclusive of \$377,948 in pledges, \$110,000 income from rentals and \$86,050 funded from endowment. An operating deficit of \$160,482 was anticipated after \$816,805 in operating expenses. This was to be a year where we relied heavily upon support from the endowment to support operations while we explore ways to enhance revenue via increased membership and stewardship, identifying work needed to expand rental potential at our 1154 GPA building, sale of 1180 GPA, and target outreach to a handful of core areas as pathways to a model for sustainable operations. These efforts have been challenged by the COVID-19 pandemic, which has reduced the congregation's ability to meet in person and conduct programs, reduced capacity for rentals and delayed the sale of 1180 GPA. In this environment, we focus on 'being church' largely outside of our building and seek ways to achieve a better balance of financial operations over the next one to three years.

For the first three quarters, operating deficit was nearly \$16k greater than projected for the nine-month period.

- Revenues –
 - YTD revenues are \$69k behind plan for the nine-month period, which is largely attributed to the church delaying drawing from the endowment as it has not been needed for cash flow purposes.
 - ◊ Contributions from the congregation are \$9,818 ahead of plan for the nine-month period. If you recall, we had a larger positive variance earlier in the year, which is attributed to members accelerating pledge payments to assist Church's cash flow with anticipated COVID-19 impact. Gifts overall through the first nine months so far represent 77% of annual budget.
 - ◊ Rentals are 13% behind budget, which is attributed largely to groups other than Noah's Ark and NPS daycare suspending meeting due to the COVID pandemic safety protocols and hesitancy to resume meeting with many older or at-risk participants.
 - ◊ Miscellaneous income includes monthly payments pursuant to the P&S agreement for 1180, which are more than budgeted due to extensions of the P&S and interest income, which is under budget due to lower interest rates.

Continued on pg 5

Summary Operating Statement -- Year to Date September 30, 2020

		2020	30-Sep-20	30-Sep-20	Favorable / (unfavorable)	
		Annual	Budget YTD	Actual YTD	(\$)	(%)
000s		Budget				
REVENUE						
	Pledges	\$ 377.9	\$ 283.5	\$ 292.8	\$ 9.4	3%
	Other Member Contributions	35.0	26.3	26.7	0.5	2%
	Endowment	96.1	72.0	-	(72.0)	-100%
	Rentals	110.0	82.5	71.8	(10.7)	-13%
	Other/Miscellaneous	36.3	27.2	30.8	3.5	13%
		655.3	491.5	422.1	(69.4)	-14%
OPERATING EXPENSES						
	Outreach	25.0	20.8	13.5	7.3	35%
	Minister & Staff	472.1	354.0	340.6	13.5	4%
	Education & Worship	17.0	12.8	4.8	7.9	62%
	Music	78.2	58.7	45.9	12.7	22%
	Parish Admin	38.3	28.7	16.8	11.9	42%
	Building Maintenance	142.1	106.6	96.1	10.5	10%
	1180 GPA	9.3	9.3	11.2	(1.9)	-21%
	Other	34.9	31.4	39.5	(8.1)	-26%
		816.8	622.2	568.4	53.8	9%
Operating Surplus / (Deficit)		\$ (161.5)	\$ (130.7)	\$ (146.3)	\$ (15.6)	

Expenses are nearly \$54K lower than budgeted for the nine-month period:

- A significant portion (29%) is attributed to timing, i.e. related to Outreach and denomination assessment to UCC that were delayed but anticipated to be funded before year-end.
- Nearly 1/4 (24%) is attributed to reductions in the Music program in response to changes made with extended virtual worship and in consideration of COVID safety protocols. Education / worship are also under budget due to changes in programming for the same reason.
- Carrying costs for 1180 GPA are over budget, which is attributed to assumption that the property would be sold by June 30 and budget including six months of carrying costs. 'Other' expenses are also over budget for the same reason as Bank loan interest was budgeted for six months.
- Other favorable variances are attributed to virtual meetings and resulting reduced programming costs in areas of staff compensation, education / worship, and building maintenance. These areas have also experienced some increase expense in areas of technology and cleaning.

During the year, our cash flow benefitted greatly from the \$74k PPP loan, which has funded the Church's payroll over several months and allowed us to delay drawing from the Endowment. We are anticipating applying for forgiveness of the PPP loan during the

fourth quarter, which would show as non-operating revenue in 2020 assuming forgiveness is approved prior to year-end.

In the weeks ahead, we are focused on budgeting operations for 2021 where we expect some continued reduction in rental income from tenants, continued reduced music programming and adjustments to building maintenance to address current needs. We are also seeking to extend the P&S with the Buyer for 1180 and extend the loan from Needham Bank.

Endowment is up 1.2% YTD based on continued improvement with a 5.3% gain during the third quarter, following wide fluctuations in market activity due to COVID-19 during the early weeks of the pandemic. Our balanced investment strategy approved and implemented in 2017 has helped mitigate risk and gold and cash positions have provided a degree of counterweight to stock positions. Limited rebalancing during the 2nd quarter was needed to maintain asset allocation with shifts to cash to assure adequate liquidity in the months ahead.

Respectfully submitted,
Trish Marinilli
Director and Chair, Finance Team



SUPPORT FOR FAMILY PROMISE METROWEST

Family Promise Metrowest (FPM), headquartered in Natick, has supported local families facing homelessness for 17 years. The organization has done an excellent job adjusting to the circumstances and has increased the number of families being served while still following covid safe protocols. In addition to providing shelter to 6 families at a time, families are supported in their transition from shelter. FPM also runs programs to prevent evictions and to provide educational and career building opportunities for families at risk.

We can support FPM this fall!!
<https://familypromisemetrowest.org/news-events/events.html>

Savers FUNdrive Wed Nov 11 - Fill a truck with gently used clothing and household items to be delivered to Savers. The truck will be parked at the FPM office and day center at 6 Mulligan St, Natick from 10-4. See link above for details of items to be collected. Contact Vance Fernandez if you require assistance with dropoff.

20 for 20 Raffle - For \$20 you will be entered in a raffle for \$5,000. Purchase tickets by Dec. 4. See link above for details.

Keeping the Promise Auction 2020 - The auction goes live Friday Nov 27 at 5:00. Items can be previewed starting Friday Nov 13. See link above for details.

Keeping the Promise Concert 2020 - Registration now open! Saturday, Dec. 5th at 7 pm FPM will be broadcasting a virtual holiday concert in support of their programs. Participating musicians will include Livingston Taylor. See link above to register.

Affordable Apartments - FPM is looking for affordable apartments to match with families ready to transition from shelter. If you are aware of appropriate apartments please contact Vance Fernandez.

Follow FPM on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram for their latest news.

If you have questions or would like more information about getting involved with FPM contact Vance Fernandez at vancefernandez@hotmail.com.

ENVIRONMENTAL MINISTRIES TEAM NEWS ...EARTH STEWARDSHIP FOR OUR LIVES TODAY...

Environmental/Climate Change Books for your Holiday Gift List

The Sixth Extinction: An Unnatural History, by Elizabeth Kolbert. Throughout her travels on assignment for the New Yorker as their environmental writer, Kolbert informs readers about the five periods in our planet's history when mass extinctions have occurred, adding to the weight of current observations which place us squarely within a sixth such period - this one caused by the last 2 centuries of our industrial, agricultural and urban development.

Kolbert shares her experiences of being embedded in variety of locations with naturalists and others committed to ongoing anthropological and geological studies. These take her from deep in the Amazon to the Great Barrier Reef, with stops in northern arboreal forests and other stressed environments. Upon conclusion, readers have a more nuanced view of how evolution works and why some species die off, as well as an appreciation for the efforts to protect and revive populations of both flora and fauna.

The Hidden Life of Trees: What They Tell, How They Communicate - Discoveries from a Secret World, by Peter Wohlleben. This book journeys deep into the forest to uncover the fascinating and surprisingly moving hidden life of trees.

Last Child in the Woods: Saving our Children from Nature-Deficit Disorder, by Richard Louv.

Louv explains the connection between children raised indoors on screens and the rise of concerning health trends.

Rising: Dispatches from the New American Shore, by Elizabeth Rush. A 2019 Pulitzer Prize finalist in general nonfiction. "Deeply felt ... Rush captures with precise words that almost amount to poetry; the book is further enriched with illuminating detail from the lives of those people inhabiting today's coasts... Elegies like this one will play an important role as people continue to confront a transformed, perhaps unnatural world." -New York Times.

Parable of the Sower by Octavia E. Butler. In a future where society is in partial collapse due to climate change, Lauren Oya Olamina is forced from her relatively comfortable gated community to journey on foot to look for a safe and habitable refuge.

The Overstory, by Richard Powers. A 2019 Pulitzer Prize winning novel which weaves stories about nine Americans whose unique life experiences with trees bring them together to address the destruction of forests.

The Lorax, by Dr. Seuss. A classic children's book with an environmental message about extractive capitalism that is relevant to all age groups.

Bee & Me, by Alison Jay. A book for young readers, describing the importance of bees in our ecosystem.

The Water Princess, by Susan Verde. A story of a young girl who wants to bring potable water to her West African village.

TRUNK-OR-TREAT 2020

Thank you to everyone who participated in our masked, socially distant Trunk-or-Treat event Sunday, October 25. It was wonderful to be able to share some safe Halloween fun with over 75 families in our community. Here are a few photos of our wonderfully decorated cars.



ADVENT-AT-HOME KITS



These kits will help families with children in Pre-K through Grade 5 explore and celebrate the season of Advent together

using a weekly craft, Bible story (read or use a video), and Advent wreath and prayer. Our CE team is helping to assemble and deliver kits during November. To receive your kit(s), please reserve them by emailing your address and the names and ages of your kiddos to Rachel Busby at smithr119@yahoo.com.

CHRISTMAS PAGEANT SIGN-UPS



Sign up now to participate in our socially-distanced Christmas pageant! Each family will be one group of characters (for example, a family with two adults and three kids might be the 3 Magi and the camels). We will schedule a time for you to come into the sanctuary and record your scene with Rev. Maddie - or you can choose to record at home. Select your characters by singing up online and a member of the CE committee will contact you

to schedule your recording time. Scripts will be sent out in mid-November. Please note: no singing is required for any part however there will be opportunities to record singing separately at home if you or your family members are interested.

Sign Up Online:

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/8050e4eafad2caaff2-christmas>

WORSHIP, FELLOWSHIP &

ADULT ED



WORSHIP TOGETHER ONLINE

Sundays @10am

We'll be using Zoom and will have the same Zoom link, phone number and Meeting ID every Sunday.

The Zoom link is
<https://zoom.us/j/907548568>
The call-in number is Tel (253)
215-8782 or (301) 715-8592
The Meeting ID number is 907
548 568.

Feel free to invite your friends and family to join us, too, no matter where they live, and share this sign-in information with them. We don't want anyone who wants to be connected with a spiritual community in this turbulent time to go without.

PS: *Worship the first Sunday of the month and on holidays will include our celebration of holy communion. Please prepare your own elements--something to eat and drink. Hint: It doesn't have to be bread and grape juice. Most Sundays we'll have a bring-your-own coffee hour at the end of worship, so... bring your own and be prepared to mingle*

MINDFUL MEDITATION ONLINE Sundays @7pm

Stressed? Worried?
Scared? Bone-Tired?
There's never been a better time to lean into mindful meditation.

It's a way to reel in all our frayed emotional-physical feelers and ground ourselves again in the present moment.

Join us online on the Zoom platform via desktop, laptop, tablet, smartphone, or landline. Please contact Sue Findlay or the office at office@needhamucc.org or 781-444-2510 for the Zoom details



MEN'S FELLOWSHIP

Sunday, November 15th @ 9:15am

Men's Fellowship plans to meet with a Zoom format at 9:15. Church men will receive an emailed invitation from our Zoom host, that week preceding.

Our schedule will include a chance to say hello/introduce yourself including a personal response to the sermon topic, or chosen scripture. Please consider volunteering by signing up to lead a prayer or initiating responding to the topic. Well wishing,
John, jsbadwin@comcast.net
Rob, rob@rob.com

MID-WEEK, MID-DAY CHURCH SOCIAL HOUR ON ZOOM Wednesdays from noon - 1pm

Feeling isolated? Missing friends from church? Enjoying Zoom worship (or not), but just want some time to be together, talk, and catch up? Everyone is invited. There will be no program, just fellowship, time to check in, catch up, and reconnect. Stay for as much or as little of the hour as your like. And if you can't make it this Wednesday, come next week or the week after. Use the church's Worship zoom link to attend



CONFRONTING RACISM AND REVIVING INDIGENOUS CULTURE Sunday, November 8 @ 11:15am

As our church engages around the issue of racism and promotes opportunities for learning and self-awareness, the Guatemala Partnership announces a speaker presentation that promises to deepen our understanding of similar social justice issues and efforts that are ongoing among our Indigenous friends in Guatemala. Please join us on Sunday, November 8th, following the church service to hear their presentation, followed by an opportunity for questions and discussion.



THE GIVING TREE

Believe it or not, it's time to put up the Giving Tree

This year we're collecting donations to be turned into gift cards for the families served by Family Promise Metrowest. These folks are doing the hard work of transitioning from homelessness into stable housing. Your donations will help make their holidays just that much happier. We know it's not as fun to give money as it is to shop for a present, but your gift will empower these parents to choose gifts for their own children and put food on the table throughout the Christmas season.

You can make a donation via the Paypal link on our website at www.NeedhamUCC.org (simply choose "Giving Tree" from the drop-down menu) or by sending your check made out to the "Congregational Church of Needham" with the memo: "Giving Tree" to the church office at 1154 Great Plain Ave., Needham, MA 02492.



**'CONFRONTING RACISM AND REVIVING
INDIGENOUS CULTURE'
SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 8TH, AFTER THE CHURCH
SERVICE VIA ZOOM**

As our church engages around the issue of racism and promotes opportunities for learning and self-awareness, the Guatemala Partnership announces a speaker presentation that promises to deepen our understanding of similar social justice issues and efforts that are ongoing among our Indigenous friends in Guatemala.

As part of their virtual tour across the U.S., Willy Barreno and Jason Del Águila, leaders of DESGUA (Sustainable Development for Guatemala), will join us via Zoom to describe a major focus of today's Indigenous movement known as "decolonization." This work involves reclaiming and reviving Indigenous ways of organizing, worshipping, inhabiting the land, and providing for communities' well-being. DESGUA has a special focus on supporting migrants and deportees and does work in both Guatemala and the U.S.

Our relationship with Santa María Tzejá is more than just about visiting families and sharing experiences with our friends in Guatemala; and more than supporting education and health. It is also about learning from their experiences, history of struggle against oppression and poverty, and Maya view of the world, all of which can broaden our perspectives and enhance our work towards social justice and against oppression here and elsewhere.

Given that even in non-COVID times many people are unable to have an in-person experience in Guatemala,

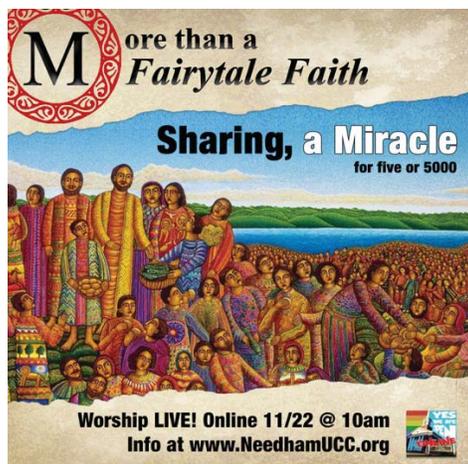
we offer this opportunity to engage virtually with speakers working for social justice in both Guatemala and the U.S. Please join us on Sunday, November 8th, following the church service to hear their presentation, followed by an opportunity for questions and discussion.

Reminder: COVID Health Needs in Santa María

Tzejá: Thanks to those who have made a donation toward masks, gloves, and other health supplies to help our partner village to prepare for further cases of COVID. If you have not made a donation and are able to do so, please click on the PayPal link on the church website, selecting the "Guatemala COVID Health Fund" option; or via the link in the Guatemala appeal in the weekly Constant Contact. Thanks for your solidarity.

Calendars for Sale: Calendars from NISGUA (Network in Solidarity with the People of Guatemala) will once again be available for purchase. They cost \$20 each, or \$35 for two. Proceeds will go toward COVID-19 health needs in Santa María Tzejá. The calendars make great Christmas gifts, especially for anyone who has traveled to the village. Call or text Val Kistler at cell: 339-225-2283, or email her at valk228@gmail.com. She will deliver to your home (if in Needham) or send by mail.

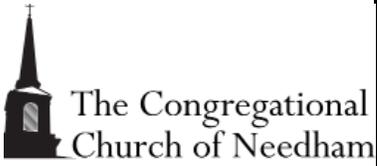
Alternative Gifting: Looking for a meaningful Christmas gift? Or something for the person who does not need any more "stuff"? Consider a donation (of any amount) to the Guatemala Partnership and receive a beautiful card (with an envelope) that you can give to someone that says you made a donation in their honor to support the village of Santa María Tzejá. For details, call or text Val Kistler at cell: 339-225-2283, or email her at valk228@gmail.com.



More than a Fairytale Worship Series

You've changed since your elementary school days. Shouldn't your faith? In this sermon series we're taking a second, more mature look at some Sunday school Bible story classics, with an eye toward not just deconstructing but deepening our understanding. As the poet says, "Careful the tales you tell—Children will listen." And so will adults. Let's listen again, together.

- 11/1 "On Earth as It is in Heaven: Love in Life and Death"
- 11/8 "Less a Furnace, More a Crucible: It's Not Just the What But the Why"
- 11/15 "Manna: 'I Did Not Order This'"
- 11/22: "Sharing, a Miracle: For Five or 5000"



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OTHER WAYS TO BE CONNECTED

We are working hard to keep up and put out good resources for you and your family through all the means at our disposal. Please check in and make use of any and all of these as you feel the need. Please also let us know what you would like to see. Email Rev. John at revjohn@needhamucc.org and Rev. Maddie at revmaddie@needhamucc.org.

The church website: www.NeedhamUCC.org

This is the hub to stay connected. If you lose any of these other sites or information, they'll be up there.

On Facebook: www.facebook.com/NeedhamUCC

Sign up for our private Facebook Group: NeedhamUCC In-House Group

On Twitter: [@NeedhamUCC](https://twitter.com/NeedhamUCC)

On Instagram: [@NeedhamUCC](https://www.instagram.com/NeedhamUCC)

THE PROPERTY TEAM SEEKS A "PRO"

Danielle Jurdan now serves BOTH as the Church Administrator AND as the Property Manager. The Property Team supports her in her efforts to anticipate and prioritize the maintenance needs of our building. The Team seeks someone with a knowledge of architecture, construction or building systems to join us. Now more than ever we need to be good stewards of our building and our finances.

Contact Sue Cotton, mscotton59@gmail.com, if you could offer a few hours a month to the Team.

address

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