

Dear Friends,

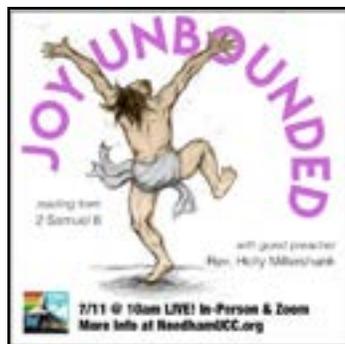
Thank you to everyone, in-person and remote, who gathered under a double-portion of grace for the ‘soft launch’ of our new hybrid worship this past Sunday. Of course, not everything went according to plan – nothing ever does! – but still the Spirit was moving. It was beautiful to see faces in the pews and on the screen, being church together, despite the glitches. I trust the Spirit will continue to inspire us as we bend and stretch and put this new technology to work for the sake of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. These slower summer months give us a great opportunity to work out the bugs in preparation for a fuller roll-out in the fall.



In the meantime, I hope that wherever you are this summer, whether at home or on vacation or visiting family, you will take time to turn aside, tune in, and be church together, in-person or remote as suits your needs. That’s one of the biggest gifts we’ve received this year, along with the heartache: the realization that we can be church in so many more ways than we’d previously imagined. Yes, it will feel awkward and uncomfortable for a while yet, and we’ll do everything we can to make things run as smoothly as possible, but ultimately, wherever and however two or three are gathered in the name of Jesus, that is the church. We are the church.

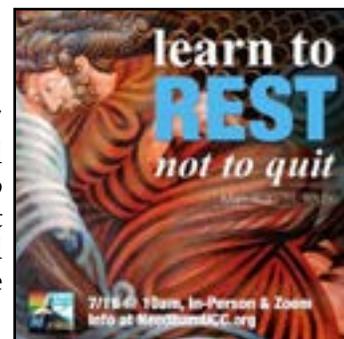
Peace,
Rev. John

COMING UP IN WORSHIP

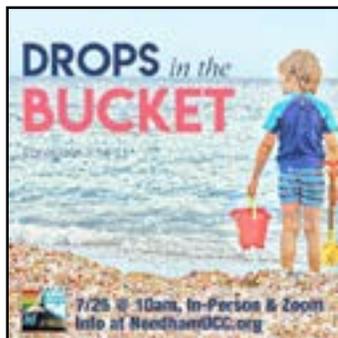


July 4: “Sacred the Body “ (Psalm 139)
Rev. Maddie Foster will lead this **REMOTE ONLY** worship service **LIVE!** via Zoom.

July 11, “Joy Unbounded”
Rev. Holly Millershank, our interim associate conference minister here in the Metropolitan Boston Association of the Southern New England Conference of our United Church of Christ denominational family will be our guest preacher with the theme “Joy Unbounded.” (2 Samuel 6:1-5. 12b-19) This will be a hybrid worship service



July 18, “Learn to Rest, Not to Quit”
Even Jesus took a day off. When will we learn that rest isn’t a privilege or a reward but a necessity for human flourishing and even a commandment from God? Step away, and the work will still be here. Don’t, and you won’t be, not for long. (Mark 6:30-34, 53-56) This will be a hybrid worship service



July 25, “Drops in the Bucket”
The Gospel really is a matter of perspective, of learning to see the world as God sees it, sees us, to know our place in the world, and our value. Just because we are not everything doesn’t mean we’re nothing. Just because we’re small doesn’t mean we don’t have an essential role to play in communicating the boundless love of God. (Ephesians 3:14-21) This will be a hybrid worship service.

P-F Letters Urgently Needed

“Reminder to Guatemala Partner Families: We are past the due date for partner family (and scholarship student) letters! So if you haven’t sent yours in yet, please send them ASAP to Dave Johnson, preferably by Email: davebjohnson77@gmail.com. Or by Snail mail: Dave Johnson, 505 Great Plain Ave, Needham, MA 02492. Or just use the website: www.guatemalapartners.org. The virtual July/ August delegation is close approaching, and our volunteer translators need time to get your letters into Spanish. Thanks for your collaboration.

Covid-19 Update in Santa María Tzejá

Sadly, the recent outbreak of Covid-19 has taken the lives of at least two community members in Santa María Tzejá. Dozens of others are sick, including several hospitalized. The region has run out of Covid tests.

Leaders in Santa María Tzejá are drawing on funds sent by our church community to respond to the crisis. To avoid crowding, they bought a tarp to provide shade outside the Health Post while patients await their shots or outpatient treatment.

They also paid a local communications service to broadcast messages by loudspeaker in every neighborhood about the time and place of upcoming Covid-19 vaccinations. This effort paid off, as over 200 people aged 50-plus showed up for their vaccination on the scheduled day. Having only brought 30 doses, health authorities had to return later in the week to cover the additional community members.

Guatemala Table at Flea Marché

Supporters of the Guatemala program set up and hosted informational tables and a handicrafts sale at the Flea Marché, raising some funds for Santa María Tzejá, while also educating our community neighbors about

our church’s partnership.

Many thanks to all the clean-up folks who helped to pack up leftovers from the Flea Marché to be stored for the fall Guatemala Yard Sale.



Yard Sale News: And Save the Date, Sept. 18

We are pleased to announce that the Guatemala Yard Sale will be held outdoors at the Church this year. Many thanks to Dave and Caryl Johnson for their efforts and flexibility in hosting the sale for so many years. We hope to continue the broad participation of our church community in their roles as item donors, volunteer workers, and shoppers who have made this a popular, fun, and joyful event over the years. We will start recruiting workers by late July or August, so please be open to committing a few hours of your time when you are contacted.

In the meantime, put the Yard Sale date/time in your calendars (Saturday, September 18, 9am – 2 pm), and save any of the items listed below until the week before the sale. Sorters and pricers will be working at the church, and the September FOCUS will publicize where and when you can drop off your donations.



Items wanted (in clean, working order): Kitchen and household items, children’s gear, toys, games, and puzzles for all ages, current sports equipment (from recent ski boots to hockey gear, etc.), bikes, collectible or vintage items, jewelry, framed artwork, electronics (no TV’s or computers), books/ DVD’s/records, outdoor furniture, or small furniture items. For questions or to volunteer your time, please contact Brenda Metzler: bmetzler7@verizon.net.

FOCUS

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

September issue
deadline:
August 25th

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

The Church Board
board@needhamucc.org

Judith Stewart, Moderator
moderator@needhamucc.org

The Deacons
Nancy Lane, Chair
emaildeacons@needhamucc.org

Pastoral Relations
Committee
prc@needhamucc.org

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

WORSHIP, FELLOWSHIP & ADULT ED

HYBRID WORSHIP

Sundays @10am

As we gather this summer, we hope you will join us, either live in the sanctuary or live via Zoom, as the Spirit leads you.

If you choose to participate via Zoom, nothing will change. **The Zoom link is <https://zoom.us/j/907548568> The call-in number is (253) 215-8782 or (301) 715-8592, The Meeting ID number is 907 548 568.**

If you choose to participate in the sanctuary, here's what you need to know:

- You do not need to sign up ahead of time.
- Enter from the parking lot through the door by the office. If you or a loved one need to use the ramp, please contact revjohn@needhamucc.org ahead of time and plan to park in front of the church along Great Plain Ave.
- Bring and wear your mask.
- Dress comfortably. It's summer, and the sanctuary is not air conditioned.
- Give your name to the ushers to help us with contact tracing.
- Maintain social distance.

You can choose your own seat anywhere in the green areas in the Sanctuary. Families may sit together.

- We will not sing, not yet.
- Bathroom facilities will be available on a one-at-a-time basis.
- There will be no childcare and no in-person Sunday school.

METROWEST WORKER CENTER

Sunday, July 11th @11:11am

Join us for a presentation by Diego Low of the Metrowest

Worker Center about the ways in which the Center helps immigrant workers and their families, and how our church can help.

MEN'S FELLOWSHIP

Sunday, July 18th @ 9:15am

LIVE! via Zoom at <https://zoom.us/j/93975548873?pwd=S3AydjcxQjdjUGhUaW8rM0dlQnpvUT09>

Sure, the breakfast may be BYOBreakfast at this point, but the fellowship remains as rich as ever. Join us for conversation around worship scripture. *****ALL***** men in the congregation are invited to this time of reflection and fellowship.

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-mental-physical feelers and ground ourselves again in the present moment.

Join us online on the Zoom platform. Contact Sue Findlay or the office at office@needhamucc.org or 781-444-2510 for the Zoom details

"A MAZE IS ABOUT LOSING YOUR WAY. A LABYRINTH IS ABOUT FINDING IT."



Please enjoy our outdoor labyrinth on the front lawn of the church at 1154 Great Plain Ave. We're inviting our whole community to enjoy it as well. There are information sheets available there with suggestions for how to approach walking.

From the Board

Fundraising for the Operating Budget

Flea Marche was a great success! Thank you to Kristen Mollerus, Dave Johnson, Carol Oberle, Diana Conroy and Nisha Kurian for organizing a wonderful event for the church and wider community. Church members and friends were so happy to see each other in person and do some shopping. Rev. Maddie did a great job leading the Youth bake sale. Thank you to everyone who volunteered at the event and those who contributed yard sale items. Our craft vendors are eager to return in the future. The event raised about \$3,000, and the team has lots of ideas of how to build on the success next year.

Property

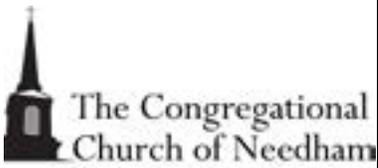
The church has been approached by Dish Network about leasing space in the steeple and a small area in the basement of the building. The steeple can accommodate two service providers and we currently have only one, T-Mobile. The Property Team and the Board are reviewing the proposed lease agreement and will negotiate with Dish Network. Such a lease agreement could provide a small revenue stream to support the operating budget.

A number of property improvements will be undertaken during the summer months. Improvements include fence repairs around the playground, waterproofing the Infant Room used by NCE Childcare, expanding Wi-Fi in Fellowship Hall and possibly elsewhere, and installing partitions, crash bars and keypads to allow separation of space in the basement.

Personnel

The Board has revised the Sick Leave Policy in our Employee Handbook to be fully compliant with the Massachusetts Earned Sick Time Law and to clarify the policy for full time and part-time employees.

Respectfully Submitted,
Judith Stewart, Moderator



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office@needhamucc.org

On the web at
needhamucc.org

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

 **Like us on**
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 Congregational Church
 of Needham UCC

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	<p>And now... We're a Podcast!</p> <p>In an attempt to make our weekly sermons more accessible and more useful to you, we've created a new, audio-only podcast we're calling</p> <p>"Yes! We're Open: Living Faith with Needham UCC"</p> <p>Find us on podcast providers including iTunes, Spotify, and others. (If you can't find it on your favorite service, let us know and we'll put it there.) So now it's even easier to listen to a sermon again or for the first time, around the house, in the car, or while you're out walking off the pandemic blues. You can even easily share a sermon or the whole podcast with someone you think might enjoy it. It's a great way to share our church. So like it, subscribe, and start listening now. (Oh, and give us a "like" to make it easier for others to find our podcast, too. (Find it now at http://needhamucc.buzzsprout.com)</p> 
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THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF NEEDHAM
 UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
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