



From Rev. John

GOOD NEWS! The last pieces of our audio-visual upgrade for the Sanctuary have arrived and will be installed over the next week. That means we'll be getting some training soon after and –God willing!– we'll be able to test drive our new simultaneous, in-person and remote hybrid worship before the end of this month!

If you are interested in being trained on this system to help as a tech deacon, please contact Danielle in the church office at office@needhamucc.org

As we prepare to re-enter the Sanctuary this summer, our COVID Advisory Team has been keeping up to date with the course of the vaccine across the country and in our community and the changing guidance provided by the Centers for Disease Control and Massachusetts public health authorities. On their recommendation,

we will be making the following updates to our protocols for in-person worship:

- We will move to maintaining 6' social distance in the Sanctuary;
- Given that, our maximum capacity in the Sanctuary will move from 35 to 65.
- Windows will remain open.
- We will still require registration ahead of time.
- We will not ask screening questions on the way in.
- Masks will still be mandatory, but you may wear your own mask. (The church will have extras on hand.)
- Seating will still be assigned.
- The bathrooms in the building will be open for use on a one-at-a-time basis.
- We will not congregate in the building aside from worship. Outdoors is fine.
- Children and youth activities will remain outdoors and online. Childcare will not be available.
- We will begin to integrate instrumental musicians and vocal soloists into our in-person experience. We will reassess where we are vis-à-vis congregational singing later in the summer.

Thank you all for your inspired patience and faithful perseverance as we move through this reopening process as thoughtfully, prayerfully, and deliberately as possible, continuing to be guided by our three core objectives: (1) To remain safe; (2) To remain a vibrant congregation; and (3) To provide an equitable worship experience for those who choose to participate in-person and those who choose to participate remotely.

From the Board

ALL HANDS ON DECK! - After the Annual Meeting we had several congregational conversations about how we together can chart a healthy and sustainable financial path into the future. To supplement the income the church receives from pledges and rentals, the church needs to create additional fundraisers that are fun, increase our visibility in the community, and are not too labor intensive for our members. The Fundraising Team has organized the first event, FLEA

MARCHÉ on Saturday, June 12, and the church needs your help to make it a success. Please see their notice in Focus for how you can donate your Timeless Treasures, yard sale items, and your time that day.

FINANCE - The church has been notified that the endowment will receive a gift of approximately \$77,000 from the Rimmele Trust. Our forebears continue to usher us into the future but we cannot count on these gifts to appear.

1180 - We continue to wait on a decision regarding the appeal of

the Superior Court's decision in December of 2020 to dismiss the suit filed by the neighbor to 1180.

HYBRID WORSHIP - As we move toward hybrid worship, I encourage patience with and empathy for our ministers, staff and lay leaders. They are navigating uncharted waters. Reach out to them with kind and encouraging messages. Worship will be different from pre-Covid, but worship will recharge your spirit.

Respectfully Submitted,
Judith Stewart, Moderator

**PARTNER FAMILY LETTERS DUE
JUNE 6**

A delegation will not travel to Santa María in August but a letter exchange will still happen. Please write your family and send the letter to Dave Johnson, letter collector extraordinary; davebjohnson77@gmail.com

SCHOLARSHIP SUCCESS STORY

Manolo is a young engineer and entrepreneur from Santa María Tzejá who has launched a new



internet initiative. A top student in middle school, he won a Needham scholarship to continue to high school where he studies science and technology. He pursued a college degree in engineering.

After graduating, Manolo sought out others interested in offering internet in the region where Santa María Tzejá is located. Currently, local internet service is slow and intermittent. Manolo and his partners formed a business in 2020 and last month installed the very first fiber optic cable in the region. For now, their brand-new endeavor is concentrated in the municipal center, but they hope to expand to communities such as Santa María where the schools, computer center, home offices, and families would benefit from a quality internet provider. Manolo is just one example of a scholarship beneficiary providing an important service in Guatemala.

**COVID-19 OUTBREAK IN SANTA
MARÍA**

After a year of strict prevention measures with only one coronavirus case, and in the absence of an effective public health campaign, many people in Santa María had stopped believing COVID-19 still presented a risk. They are now dealing with a COVID-19 outbreak, with at least 20 confirmed cases and a presumably significant number of undiagnosed carriers. An infant and two adults were hospitalized. The local health post has run out of the medical kits that are normally provided to anyone who tests positive. Schools, which were operating a hybrid model, have closed again, and people are retaking precautions. Funds donated by our church community and others for COVID relief in Santa María have been wired to the community to be used for emergency treatment and prevention of further spread.

**GUATEMALA PARTNERSHIP AT
THE FLEA MARCHÉ**

The Guatemala Partnership will be participating in the Flea Marché on Saturday, June 12th from 9am to 1pm. We will have an array of handmade Guatemalan crafts for sale. Stop by and check out the crafts and hear about updates from Santa María. All funds raised will support education and development in the village.

**SAVE THE DATE GUATEMALA
YARD SALE SEPTEMBER 18**

Save the date and your donations for the annual Guatemala Yard Sale. Please set aside your clean best quality items to donate (no clothing) including; kitchen and household items, children's toys, games, and puzzles for all ages, current sports equipment, bikes, collectible or vintage items, jewelry, framed artwork, electronics (no TV's or computers), books/DVD's/records, outdoor furniture, or small furniture items.

Donations will be accepted the week before the sale. For questions please contact Brenda Metzler: bmetzler7@verizon.net.

FOCUS

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

**July issue deadline:
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

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

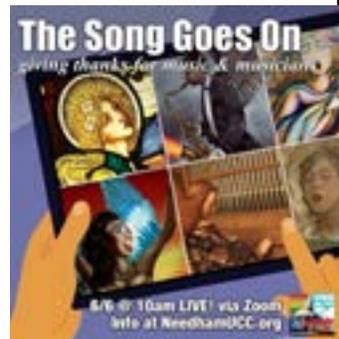
To provide feedback about any aspect of the church, email feedback@needhamucc.org

COMING UP IN WORSHIP IN JUNE

June 6

The Song Goes On: Giving Thanks for Music & Musicians

Ours has always been a musical church. But the past 16 months have reminded us just how central the gift of music is to our embodied faith, how we depend on music to move out of our heads and into our bodies and hearts, together. This Sunday, we'll give thanks for all the volunteer and professional musicians who have kept the song going on for us through the pandemic with a program of "greatest hits" from our Chancel Choir, Chimers, Once-in-a-While Choir, Children's Choir, and volunteer instrumentalists.



June 13

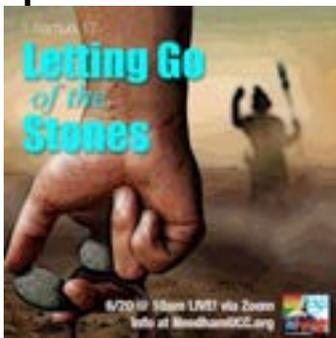
As Children

Jesus said, "Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 18:3). Which makes you wonder: Should we be training kids to be more like us adults, or should we adults be learning to be more like them? Rev. Maddie Foster will lead us in worship designed to help us reclaim that divine childlike spirit. *We will recognize recent graduates in worship, as well.*

June 20

Letting Go of the Stones

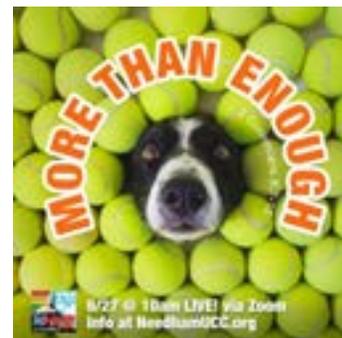
The story of David versus Goliath (1 Samuel 17), about an underdog whose faith and five smooth stones bring down a giant, has long been a Sunday school staple. But should it be? What happens when David becomes Goliath? What does this story – and even the story of Jesus' death on the cross, as it's usually related – teach our children and us about violence? Is it time to let go of the stones and take up something better? *We will observe Father's Day in worship, as well.*



June 27

More Than Enough

In his second letter to the church at Corinth, the Apostle Paul asks them to meditate on this vision for God's reign: "Those who have much do not have too much, and those who have little do not have too little" (2 Corinthians 8:7-15). In our world today, as the divide between the haves and have-nots grows ever wider, do we even know what "enough" looks like? *We will observe Pride Sunday in worship, as well.*



ONA News

BOSTON PRIDE?

What would have been the 50th anniversary of Boston Pride has been postponed AGAIN,

as it was last June. Between COVID restrictions and controversy around whether Boston Pride is genuinely inclusive of all parts of the LGBTQIA+ community, the Pride Parade is currently postponed, possibly until September. Changes have been made in the Board of Boston Pride in hopes of bringing true inclusion and the right spirit to the parade. We'll share more when we know more.

ISSUE: ANTI-TRANSGENDER LEGISLATION

Keep your eyes open for email alerts and news about proposed legislation concerning medical care

for transgender people. Some states are trying to prevent transgender youth from receiving gender affirming medical care, including procedures and medication. This is a matter of life or death, as well as mental health. Most alerts provide a link for you to weigh in to stand against these harmful bills.

ANTI-RACISM COURSE TAKES A SUMMER BREAK

The last session of the spring course of Constructive Conversations on Race will be held on June 10. This spring we have addressed such topics as how to talk about race, recalling and facing our own racial identity, White identity, White fragility, racial portrayals of Blacks, Asian American hate, colorblind thinking, policing, and Black mothers who have lost children to police violence. Participants have grown comfortable with being uncomfortable in these important discussions.



The Ministerial Review Team invites all church participants to complete this year's one page survey as part of the annual review process for our ministers. Rev. Maddie and Rev. John deserve our feedback about how they navigated us through the pandemic, as well as about what we envision for our next steps. Please take 15 minutes to complete these confidential surveys by Friday, June 18th. Contact Sue Turner with any questions. suegturner1@comcast.net.

Rev. Maddie's survey: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/CVB2CS8>

Rev. John's survey: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/CDKMMRY>

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.*

FLEA MARCHÉ

Saturday, June 12th @9am

Join us for an open-air market in the parking lot behind The Congregational Church of Needham. There will be trunk-fulls of yard sale treasures from around our community, used books, artisan jewelry, arts, crafts, and a bake sale--all safely socially distant and masked. We will also be auctioning off two extraordinary watercolor original artworks by renowned Needham artists, Nancy Walton!

We are excited to welcome the following vendors to our 2021 Marché! Anne Nydam, Yaileen's Collection, FUNdamentally Nuts, Nabia Designs, Maggie Furtak, Le Petit Four, Donna De Maria, B-Buckled, Wendy Birchmire, Irene Greenberg, Fabienne Madsen Designs, East Coast Resin Works, Elizabeth Barber, & the Guatemala Partnership.

MEN'S FELLOWSHIP

Sunday, June 20th @ 9:15am

LIVE! via Zoom at <https://zoom.us/j/93975548873?pwd=S3AydjcxOjdjUGhUaW8rM0dlOnpvUT09>

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. Thanks to Rev. Maddie and Diana Conroy for doing the painstaking work of laying it out for us.



SAVE THE DATE

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.

Please consider helping with our Flea Marché fundraiser on June 12th!:

1. Volunteer for a timeslot to help with the event set-up, selling of goods, general logistics, or clean-up - sign up here: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/70a054ea8ab2da4fa7-flea>

2. If you'd like to donate your goods for the church to sell, please drop them off at Dave & Caryl Johnson's house (505 Great Plain Avenue) in their garage between June 4th-June 11th at noon. To keep this manageable, we are only accepting donated goods from the congregation, not the community. The list of acceptable items is as follows:

- Framed fine art
- Books (please no text books or how-to manuals from prior to 2018)
- Puzzles- complete only
- Board Games-complete only
- Children's complete craft sets and toys
- Infant/Toddler equipment clean and in working

- order (no cribs)
- Sports Equipment- complete and in working order (but no large indoor exercise items like stationary bikes, treadmills)
 - Bikes, skis, tennis racquets, skates and skateboards etc.
 - Collectibles- PLEASE GIVE US AS MUCH INFORMATION AS YOU HAVE- THAT WILL GET US BETTER PRICES!
 - Dinnerware and kitchenware
 - Glassware ("One offs" unless exceptional not accepted; no plasticware for this sale)
 - Ceramics
 - Craft supplies in good condition
 - Working lamps
 - Garden Equipment/Accessories
 - Non-powered tools (workshop, yard)
3. SPREAD THE WORD and the link for all the event details (<https://www.needhamucc.org/flea-marche.html>) - we need lots of attendees to make this a successful fundraiser!!! In addition to the yard sale items, we have 20 amazing vendors selling artwork, crafts and treats, and our very own Youth Group running a bake sale and selling lunch items!

Many thanks for your help, The Fundraising Team

Environmental Ministries Team News
...earth stewardship for our lives today...

Have you been wondering what the buzz is about native plants? It's so much more than pollinators! Find out how we suburban landowners play a key role in biodiversity stewardship from the engaging and humorous entomologist, Dr. Doug Tallamy, as part of a video series developed in Wellesley.

<http://www.wellesleyconservationcouncil.org/native-plant-and-pollinators.html>

Dr. Tallamy's talk is Part 1, the second video (with the tiger image). Watch from 5' to 1hr10' to skip the intros & Q/A.

If you are convinced by his talk on the importance of native trees and plants, Part 2 explores how to make them look great through simple landscape design principles.

Part 3 investigates why it is less work (and cost, if you have landscapers) to maintain a mostly native plants yard compared with a typical, mostly turf grass one.

To put into action at home what you learn, two area nonprofits specialize in native plants. They are--

The Native Plant Trust <https://www.nativeplanttrust.org>

Grow Native Massachusetts <https://www.grownativemass.org>

Imagine Eden everywhere, and right in our back - and front - yards!

Worship Flower Donations



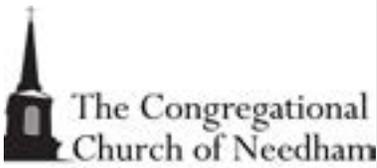
If you would like to honor someone, you can honor them with a flower dedication on a specific Sunday. Your donation will be on the altar during Worship on your chosen Sunday and will then be given to someone in our congregation afterward. You can sign yourself up online at <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0844A8AA23A2FD0-worship> or email the church office here or call with your two choices of dates and your dedication. Donations may be made via PayPal at https://www.paypal.com/donate?hosted_button_id=QKTT469ND37G6 or by sending a check to the church office.



WAYS TO BE CONNECTED

The church website: <https://www.needhamucc.org/>
 This is the hub to stay connected.
 On Facebook: www.facebook.com/NeedhamUCC

Sign up for our private Facebook Group:
 NeedhamUCC In-House Group
 On Twitter: @NeedhamUCC
 On Instagram: @NeedhamUCC



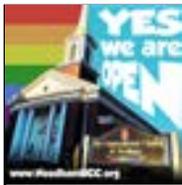
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On the web at
needhamucc.org

On the twitter
@needhamucc

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Congregational Church
of Needham UCC



And now... We're a Podcast!

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

"Yes! We're Open: Living Faith with Needham UCC"

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>)



address

stamp

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UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
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