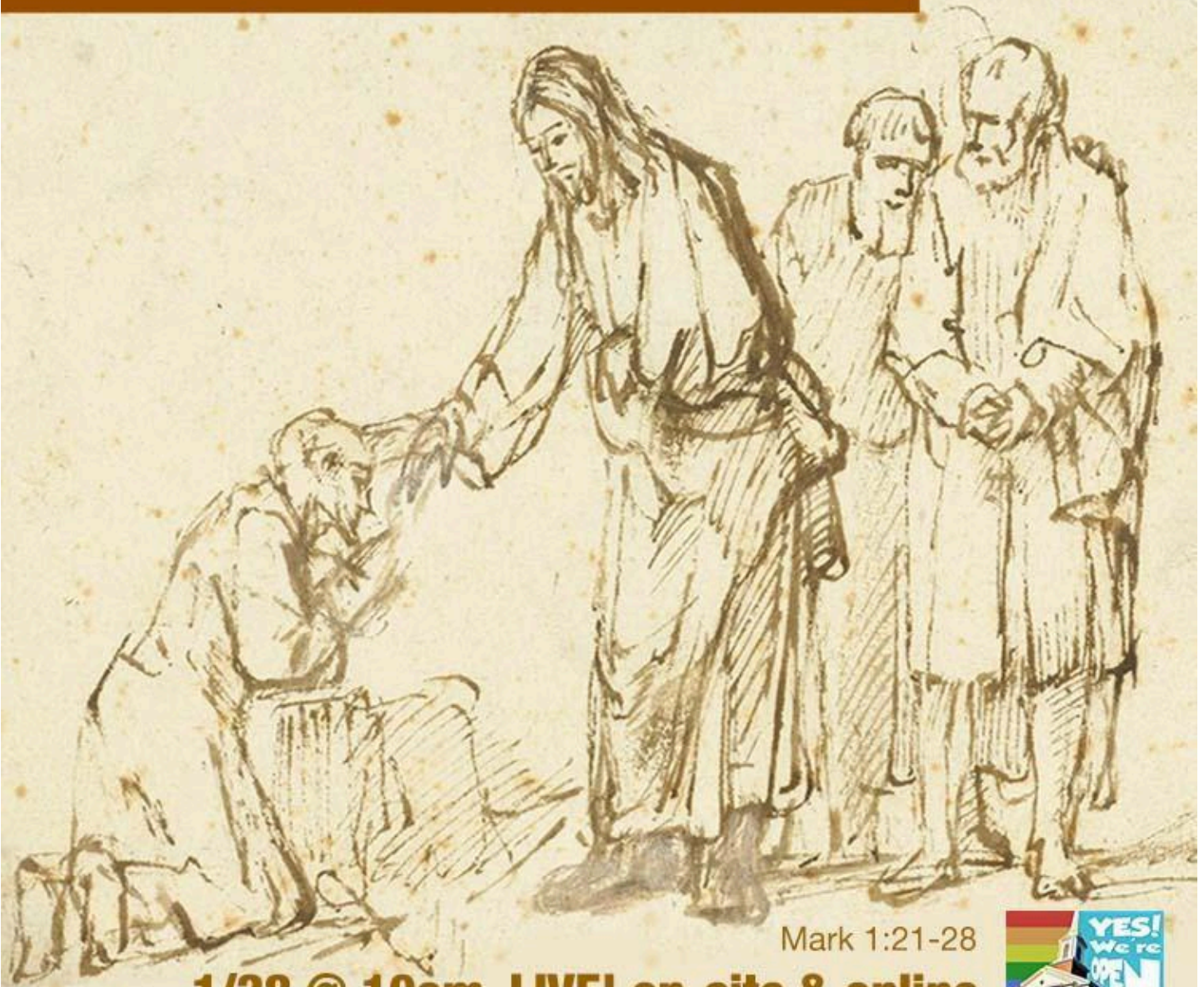


a teaching with authority



Mark 1:21-28

1/28 @ 10am, LIVE! on-site & online
Connect at www.NeedhamUCC.org



The Congregational Church of Needham, *United Church of Christ*

1154 Great Plain Ave, Needham MA 02492 / Tel 781.444.2510 / www.NeedhamUCC.org / IG @NeedhamUCC

Rev. John Gage, *senior minister*

Rev. Maddie Foster, *minister for Christian education & youth*

Valerie Becker, *director of music*

Robin Bevilacqua, *church administrator*

Cindy Sullivan, *financial administrator*

Tom Mollerus, *moderator*

Pastor-Parish Relations Committee

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January 28, 2024

My dear, it isn't the loud part / Of creeds that are pleasing to God, / Not the chant of a prayer, or the hum of a hymn, or a jubilant shout or song. / But it is the beautiful proud part / Of walking with feet faith-shod; / And in loving, loving, loving through all, no matter how things go wrong; / In trusting ever, though dark the day, and in keeping your hope when the way seems long— / Dear, these are the things that count.

from "The Things That Count" by Ella Wheeler Wilcox (1850-1919)

GATHERING *Fugue in a minor, J. Pachelbel Valerie Becker, organ*

WELCOME Rev. John MacIver Gage, Rev. Maddie Foster

CALL TO WORSHIP

One: Once, Jesus was asked, "What is the greatest commandment?"

Many: And he answered, "Love. Just love."

One: But that was too simple, and too hard. So they pressed him to say more.

Many: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your mind and with all your soul and with all your body."

One: And there was more:

Many: "You shall love your neighbor, and yourself, and you shall love your neighbor as yourself."

One: These three loves, which are really just one love, are the heart of the way Jesus lived and taught.

Many: May we never forget love is not a list—first these, then those; first us, then them, first God, then the world—but a link.

One: For we all are bound up together in a three-fold knot, bound together in love.

All: *Let us worship God together in spirit and in truth, in word and in deed.*

HYMN *Today We All Are Called to Be Disciples (see below)*

WELCOMING NEW MEMBERS & OWNING THE COVENANT

One: Let us, the members of this Congregational Church of Needham, United Church of Christ, express our welcome and affirm our mutual ministry in Christ:

Current Members: We welcome you with joy as members in this expression of the body of Christ. We promise you our friendship, fellowship, and prayers as we share the work and worship of God in the way of Jesus. Grounded together in grace, we ask God to help us grow in new directions, that we and the world may be transformed in love.

One: And now, as one body, members together, let us own—that is, affirm—the holy covenant under which we gather:

All: We will strive to be a joyful, welcoming Christian community. We will seek to be faithful in a world torn by suffering, injustice, oppression, and war. We will seek to be inspired by God, Christ's ministry, and the examples of other faithful people. We will join together in worship and song, fellowship, study, and mission to embrace the risks and challenges of continuing Christ's ministry. We will struggle to live out our faith in the world by furthering justice and peace, witnessing to the truth, and proclaiming God's love and mercy for all people.

One: We believe that all people are created in the image of God, who loves each of us as we are. Following the example of Jesus, we welcome and affirm all people, including those of every age, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression; every racial, ethnic and cultural identity, and country of origin; every faith background, family configuration and economic situation; every mental and physical ability and health status; every life experience and circumstance.

All: We will strive to be an example of God's extravagant welcome and to live these beliefs in our worship, language, actions and relationships. We invite all people who desire to join us in this journey of faith to share in the full life and ministry of this church.

READING FROM SCRIPTURE *from the Gospels, Mark 1:21-28*

SERMON "A Teaching With Authority" Rev. John MacIver Gage

HYMN *Silence, Frenzied, Unclean Spirit (see below)*

SHARING OUR PRAYERS ("O God, hear our prayer")

THE LORD'S PRAYER

(using these or whichever words are closest to your own heart)

Our Father/Mother in heaven, holy is your name. Your reign come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. And forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For yours is the kin-dom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

ANTHEM *Deep Peace, by D. Wagner*

*Deep peace of the running wave to you,
Deep peace of the flowing air to you
Deep peace of the quiet earth to you, deep peace of the shining stars.
Deep peace of the valleys green to you,
Deep peace of the warming sun to you
Deep peace of the cool of night to you, deep peace when our work is done.
Deep peace, Deep peace, Deep peace to you.
Deep peace, deep peace, the deep peace of Christ be yours this day.
Deep peace of the Son of Peace of to you,
deep peace of all things above to you
Deep peace of a guiding hand to you, deep peace of the Savior's love
Deep peace of the Savior's love, Deep peace of the Savior's love,
Deep peace to you.*

PARTNERING IN THE GOOD NEWS

SINGING OUR THANKS AND PRAISE

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
Praise God, all creatures here below;
Praise God above, you heavenly hosts—
Creator, Christ, and Holy Ghost.**

SENDING FORTH

POSTLUDE

The flowers in worship today are given in loving memory of Meta Hopkins

*Would you like to make this congregation your church home?
Would you like to know more about what it means to be a member here?*
Reach out to Rev. John at revjohn@needhamucc.org
or Rev. Maddie at revmaddie@needhamucc.org



Kids'N'Church

Children of all ages are always welcome in worship!

Quiet books and **pew pals** (soft toys) are available in the foyer outside the sanctuary doors. If your family needs a quieter space, our **reception room** has comfy chairs, a big toy box, a pack and play, and a speaker that broadcasts the service. You'll find the reception room by going right outside the sanctuary, the set of double doors in the elbow of the hall. All bathrooms have **changing tables**. **Pre-K** children who are potty trained are welcome to join our elementary Sunday school activities.

Parents are always welcome to accompany their child at any age. **Sunday School** (for children in older Pre-K through Grade 5) and **Youth Group**



(for students in grades 6 through 12) are both offered during our 10am worship service as scheduled. All children and youth remain in the sanctuary with their families to share **communion** (as parents decide), usually on the first Sunday of the month. Have questions about our Children's and Youth Ministries? Check in with Rev. Maddie following the service

or email RevMaddie@NeedhamUCC.org

We Need YOU to Teach Sunday School!

Both our Sunday School and Youth Group programs rely on the help of volunteers to teach and lead! All of the material prep is done in advance by Rev. Maddie and lesson plans are available online to make teaching as straightforward as possible for our volunteers. When you arrive to teach you simply grab the box marked for that Sunday, give everything a once-over, and prepare to welcome kids to the classroom! **Sign up at this link:** <https://tinyurl.com/CEYouth2324>

CHURCH ACTIVITIES & ANNOUNCEMENTS: January 28, 2024



Hear Ye! Hear Ye!

**Annual Congregational Meeting, 1/28 @ 11:11am
on-site & online via Zoom at <http://zoom.us/j/907548568>**

The members of The Congregational Church of Needham, United Church of Christ are called by our bylaws to meet for our **Annual Congregational Meeting following worship Sunday, 1/28 on-site & online via Zoom at <http://zoom.us/j/907548568>** to take up the following business:

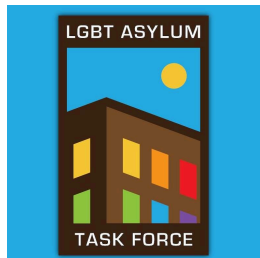
Article I - To receive and act on reports of the Standing Committees, Special Committees, and Officers of the Church

Article II - To elect Officers and Committees for the Church Year 2024

Article III - To approve procurement of a loan for financing the purchase and installation of solar panels on the roof of the Church

Article IV - To adopt a budget for Fiscal Year 2024

Article IV - To hear final plans for Rev. John Gage's upcoming sabbatical 2/12-5/18

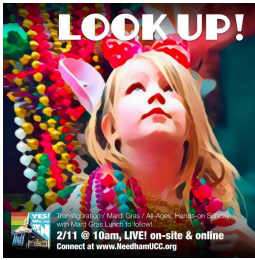


"Jesus was a Migrant" Speaker Series

LGBT+ Asylum Task Force

**2/4 @ 11:11am, LIVE on-site & online via
Zoom at <http://zoom.us/j/907548568>**

For this next installment of our Outreach Committee's on-going series of speakers on immigration, the ONA Ministry Team welcomes the LGBTQ+ Asylum Task Force, a non-profit founded out of the Hadwen Park Congregational Church in Worcester, a sibling congregation in our United Church of Christ denominational family. Our church has been a ministry partner with the Task Force for over 10 years. Al Green, the Executive Director, will talk about the history and work of the Task Force and will be joined by asylum seekers who will share their moving and powerful personal stories. Please join us for this important program.



Transfiguration Sunday / Mardi Gras Sunday Special All-Ages, Hands-On Worship!

2/11 @ 10am LIVE on-site and online at

<http://zoom.us/j/907548568>

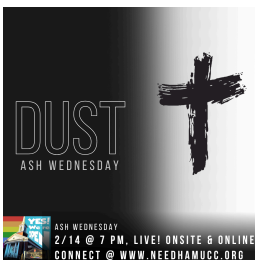
On the feast of Transfiguration, we remember that time the disciples caught a glimpse of the love of God shining clear and bright through Jesus, like winter sun through a crystal clear window. And we remember that, like Jesus, we all are children of God, and that same love shines through us, too. So for this Transfiguration Sunday, we'll celebrate with a special all-ages, hands-on activity in worship (like our Advent event back in December) making Mardi Gras beads for ourselves and others, to remind us that we are loved and called to share love with the whole world. And we'll have Mardi Gras music, too, provided by a visiting 7-piece Dixieland band.



SPECIAL: Au-Revoir All-Church Lunch

2/11 @ 11:11am in the Fellowship Hall

Rev. John's sabbatical begins after worship on 2/11 (and runs until 5/19). Come help us send him off in style with a special catered cajun-style Mardi Gras lunch, complete with king cake ordered direct from New Orleans.

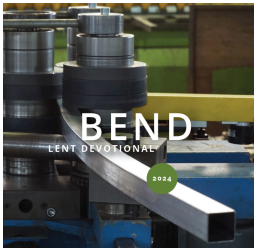


Ash Wednesday: Lent Begins

Wednesday, 2/14 @ 7pm, LIVE on-site and online at

<http://zoom.us/j/907548568>

We begin our journey through Lent with a reflective Ash Wednesday service with prayer, poetry, music, and a guided meditation. Our on-site offering will include an optional imposition of ashes. If you are participating online, you may choose to have something like olive oil to anoint yourself during this portion of the service.



BEND: Lenten Devotional, 2024

Available in hard copy or PDF

“How many of us could benefit – not from a hard yank but from a stretchy bend, not from stiffness but from resilience?

Bending can be scary, of course. ... Who knows what our limits are? Who knows if we might crack and break? But bending can be a source of strength.”

– Molly Baskette, introduction to *Bend*

This devotional from the Stillspeaking Writers’ Group offers a prayer practice to guide you through the season of Lent. Print and PDF copies will be available – please look for details on how to pick up or receive your copy in the Lent FOCUS.



Mindful Meditation ONLINE

Sundays @ 7pm LIVE! via Zoom

at **<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/79920727588>**

What is mindful meditation? *Focusing on being intensely aware of what you're sensing and feeling in the moment, without interpretation or judgment. Practicing mindfulness*

involves breathing methods, guided imagery, and other practices to relax the body and mind and help reduce stress. Join longtime practitioner Sue Findlay and others Sunday evenings online.

Today We All Are Called to Be Disciples

Today we all are called to be disciples of the Lord,
to help to set the captive free; make plowshares of the sword,
to feed the hungry, quench their thirst, make love and peace our fast,
to serve the poor and homeless first, our ease and comfort last.

Pray justice may come rolling down as in a mighty stream,
with righteousness in field and town to cleanse us and redeem.
For God is longing to restore an earth where conflicts cease,
a world that was created for a harmony of peace.

May we in service to our God act out the living word,
and walk the road the saints have trod till all have seen and heard.
As stewards of the earth may we give thanks in one accord
to God who calls us all to be disciples of the Lord.

Silence, Frenzied, Unclean Spirit

“Silence! Frenzied, unclean spirit,” cried God’s healing, Holy One.

“Cease your ranting! Flesh can’t bear it. Flee as night before the sun.”

At Christ’s voice the demon trembled, from its victim madly rushed,
while the crowd that was assembled stood in wonder, stunned, and hushed.

Lord, the demons still are thriving in the grey cells of the mind:
tyrant voices, shrill and driving, twisted thoughts that grip and bind,
doubts that stir the heart to panic, fears distorting reason’s sight,
guilt that makes our loving frantic, dreams that cloud the soul with fright.

Silence, Lord, the unclean spirit, in our mind and in our heart.

Speak your word that when we hear it, all our demons shall depart.

Clear our thought and calm our feeling; still the fractured, warring soul.

By the power of your healing make us faithful, true, and whole.