

Step by Step: A Slow Walk Through Holy Week



Holy Monday (Step 2-7)

3/9 @ 10am, on-site & online via Zoom

Connect at www.NeedhamUCC.org

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

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Valerie Becker, *director of music*

Robin Bevilacqua, *church administrator*

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Welcome! *No matter who you are or where you are on life's journey, you are invited and welcome here at The Congregational Church of Needham, United Church of Christ.*

Please take a moment to let us know you're here, whether you are an official church member, a frequent guest, or a first-timer. **Scan this QR code with the camera on your phone and follow the link to sign-in.** *There's a paper sign-in sheet in the foyer, if you prefer.*

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. All bathrooms have **changing tables**. **Pre-K children** who are potty trained are welcome to join our elementary Sunday school activities. **Sunday School is usually offered on the 2nd and 4th Sundays of each month,** unless otherwise announced.

There is Sunday school this Sunday. Children will follow their teachers downstairs to the classroom after the "Times Especially for Children."
Our next Sunday School dates are 3/23 & 4/13.

March 9, 2025

Come to your Temple here with liberation / And overturn these tables of exchange / Restore in me my lost imagination / Begin in me for good, the pure change. / Come as you came, an infant with your mother, / That innocence may cleanse and claim this ground / Come as your came, a boy who sought his father / With questions asked and certain answers found, / Come as your came this day, a man in anger / unleash the lash that drives a pathway through / Face down for me the fear the shame the danger / Teach me again to whom my love is due. / Break down in the me the barricades of death / And tear the veil in two with your last breath.

— "Cleansing the Temple" by Malcolm Guite

PRELUDE *Offertoire in C Major*, by M. Le Begue Valerie Becker

WELCOME Rev. John MacIver Gage, *senior minister*

CENTERING SONG *Order My Steps* Glenn Edward Burleigh

Order my steps in your Word, dear Lord, lead me,
guide me, everyday. Send your anointing,
God I pray. Order my steps in your Word,
please, order my steps in your Word.

CALL TO WORSHIP Matthew 4:1-11, Luke 4:1-13, Mark 1:12-13

One: When Jesus had been baptized, the Spirit was with him and led him into the wilderness. For 40 days Jesus fasted and prayed in order to walk more closely with God. When he was worn out, the devil came and said to him: "If you truly are God's Beloved, turn this stone into bread and eat."

Many: Jesus said, "No! For the scriptures say, 'Bread can keep the body alive, but the Spirit makes life worth living.'"

One: Then the devil transported Jesus to the very pinnacle of the temple in Jerusalem, and said, "If you truly are God's beloved, jump," for doesn't the scripture say "God will send the angels to catch you?"

Many: Jesus said, "No! For the scriptures also say 'Faith does not test God that way'"

One: Finally the devil swept Jesus to a high place where he could see all the nations of the world arrayed around him, and said, "Just worship me first, and I will give you power over all the peoples of earth. Imagine all the good you could do."

Many: Jesus said, "No! For the scriptures say, 'Worship only God and serve only God's purposes of justice, peace, and compassion.'"

One: Then the devil left Jesus, for a while, and holy messengers came to care for him.

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

HYMN*Again We Keep This Solemn Fast (see below)***SCRIPTURE READING***from the Gospels, Matthew 21:12-17***TIME ESPECIALLY FOR CHILDREN****SERMON***No*

Rev. John MacIver Gage

ANTHEM*God Bless Our “No”*

Chancel Choir

Text: Rev. Hannah C. Brown; Tune: KINGSFOLD

God bless our “no” when we call out cruel prejudice and hate;
God bless our protest when we shout, or reason in debate.
God bless our bodies, here to stay despite how they offend;
God bless our strength to make a way: resist, oppose, contend.

God bless our “no” when we reject unwelcome talk or touch;
God bless our claim for more respect when others take too much.
God bless our bound’ries, firm and clear, disputed or displaced;
God bless our anger and our fear. No one should be erased.

God bless our “no” when we expose the loathsome lies we learn.
God bless our change as wisdom grows, as thoughts and actions turn.
God bless our independent choice for health and self and soul;
God bless our strong, collected voice for sacred self-control.

God blesses us when we oppose what stifles and destroys;
God blesses us, She holds and grows our trust, our truths, our joys.
God blesses us to freely live and bless each other, too.
God, bless our “no” so we might give our “yes” at last to you.

SHARING OUR PRAYERS (“O God, hear our prayer”)*****SINGING THE LORD’S PRAYER** *(see below)***PARTNERING IN THE GOOD NEWS**

HYMN

O God of Earth and Altar (see below)

WE ARE BLESSED TO BE A BLESSING

POSTLUDE

CHURCH ACTIVITIES & ANNOUNCEMENTS: March 9, 2025

We *always* need Sunday School volunteers. Info?

childrenandyouth@needhamucc.org Sign up?

<https://shorturl.at/UaLJk>



Period Party

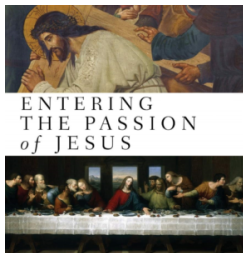
3/16 @ Noon, in the Fellowship Hall

When you're living unhoused or in a shelter, there are so many questions to think about, so many needs to be met; but there's at least one we don't often consider: "*Where am I going to get the products I need to deal with my monthly period cleanly and safely?*" So we're partnering with Circle of Hope here in Needham to address this need. We're collecting pads, tampons, pantyliners, & hygiene wipes, all individually wrapped.

TO DONATE, please use this link to our Amazon Wishlist:

https://www.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/30Z0RG31PP9WG?ref=wl_s_hare (*This ensures we get exactly the products we need.*) To donate money

to the effort, go to **www.NeedhamUCC.org/paypal** and click on the PayPal link, then select "Period Party" from the dropdown menu; or you can write a check to the church with "Period Party" in the memo line. **TO PARTICIPATE:** Join us for the Period Party after worship on 3/16 to help repackage those donations into individual bags for distribution. Our goal is to assemble 1000 kits, and many hands make light work.



Lenten Reading Group: *Entering the Passion of Jesus*
Wednesdays, 3/5-4/9 @ Noon-1pm online via Zoom at
<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/85113249091>

As we take our slow walk through Holy Week this Lent, we'll follow along with Biblical scholar and engaging guide Prof. Amy-Jill "A.J." Levine, Rabbi Stanley M. Kessler

Distinguished Professor of New Testament and Jewish Studies at UCC-related Hartford International University for Religion and Peace, in her book *Entering the Passion of Jesus*. **(We have copies available for you at the church. Just ask. You also can purchase a hard copy, Kindle, or Audible audiobook at <https://a.co/d/2HNDXal>)**



Architect Presentation

March 23 @ 11:11 in the sanctuary

Please plan to stay after worship on March 23 for a Renovation update from LDA, our architects. They will share revised plans for the new elevator and for the new bathrooms and provide an update on the process. All of this is being done to make our building accessible to those with physical disabilities to continue with our Mission to be open to all.



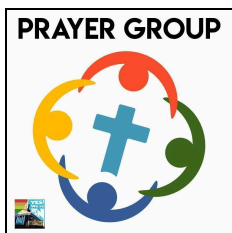
Before Worship Next Sunday, 3/16

Men's Fellowship

3rd Sunday of each month @ 9am, on-site in the Reception Room

and via Zoom at <https://zoom.us/j/93975548873>

We welcome all men of the church for fellowship and discussion of the day's scripture and sermon focus. Questions? Contact John Baldwin, jsbaldwin@comcast.net or Rob Dunlavey, rob@robd.com



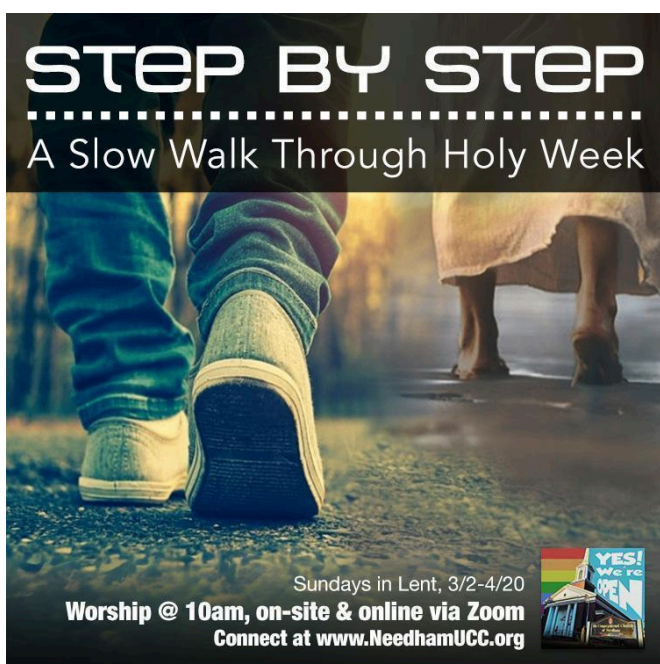
Weekly Prayer Group
Tuesdays @ 12 Noon via Zoom at
<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/84372854861>

In church we often talk about prayer as if everybody knows what prayer is. But prayer can look and feel very different for different people in different situations. Above all, prayer is a practice, and practices take practice. Join us as we practice praying together.



Mindful Meditation
Sundays @ 7pm via Zoom ONLY
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.



Lent 2025

Step by Step:
A Slow Walk Through Holy Week
Sundays, March 2-April 20
Most years, it seems, Holy Week goes by in a blur. It's Palm Sunday one moment, Jesus is entering Jerusalem to the acclaim of the crowds, and the next it's Easter, with Jesus already killed,

buried, and raised before we know it. We barely get time to acknowledge the *what* of his death much less the *why*, which is every bit as important, if not more so. What was it about what Jesus said and did and how he said and did it that so infuriated the powers and principalities of his day? What about the Gospel he lived and preached earned him the murderous enmity not just of the Roman imperial authorities but also the religious leaders of his own people? To engage these questions more deeply, we'll spend the season of Lent walking slowly through the events of Holy Week. We'll take an entire Sunday worship service to explore each of the days of Holy Week in turn from Palm Sunday to Easter. (See calendar below.) This Lent, join us on this slow, intentional journey to the cross and the heart of our faith.

“Step by Step” Lenten Schedule

3/2	Palm Sunday	3/23	Holy Wednesday	4/13	Holy Saturday
3/9	Holy Monday	3/30	Maundy Thursday	4/20	Easter Sunday
3/16	Holy Tuesday	4/6	Good Friday		

Again We Keep This Solemn Fast

Again we keep this solemn fast,
a gift of faith from ages past,
this Lent which binds us lovingly to
faith and hope and charity.

More thoughtful therefore let us make
the words we speak, the food we take.
Our sleep, our laughter, every sense,
learn peace through holy penitence.

Let us avoid each harmful way
that lures the careless mind astray;
By watchful prayer our spirits free from
scheming of the Enemy.

We pray, O blessed Three-in-One,
our God while endless ages run,
that this our Lent of of forty days, may
bring us growth and give you praise.

O God of Earth and Altar

O God of earth and altar, bow down and hear our cry;
Our earthly rulers falter, our people drift and die;
The wall of gold entomb us, the swords of scorn divide;

From all that terror teaches, from lies of pen and voice,
From all the easy speeches that make our hearts rejoice,
From value's profanation, from honor sacrificed,
From sloth and from damnation, deliver us, O Christ!

Awaken us to action and forge us into one,
defying sect and faction; O God, your will be done!
Oppressive systems snare us; our apathies increase.
Great God, in mercy spare us for justice and for peace!

The Lord's Prayer

Our God in heaven, hold is your name,
your reign come, your will done, on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread, and help us forgive,
as we have been forgiven. In the time of trial lead us into light,
for yours is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever.
Our God, in heaven, holy is your name, holy is your name.