



Illustration by Heather Brockman Lee

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

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

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PRELUDE

Voluntary 3, by M. Greene

Valerie Becker, *organ*

WELCOME

Rev. John MacIver Gage & Rev. Maddie Foster

CALL TO WORSHIP

One: We come today from different places, different moods, different experiences.

Many: Some are hectic and rushed, others quiet, other in pain; regardless, we are loved equally in God's eyes.

One: Some pray for health or happiness; some pray for strength or support;

Many: some pray for stability, and some for change, and God hears all of us.

One: God, grant us the power of curiosity, to see the world and one another as you do

Many: to welcome the comfort of friends and the discomfort of strangers as gifts from you.

One: Awaken our moral imagination to dream the world and our roles in it anew.

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

HYMN

O For a World (see below)

TIME WITH CHILDREN

Rev. Maddie Foster

SCRIPTURE

from the Letters of the Early Church, Hebrews 11:1-16

SERMON

“God is Imaginary”

Rev. John MacIver Gage

HYMN

Faith Begins With Letting Go (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 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

Polonaise opus posthumous, by F. Chopin

Valerie Becker, *piano*

HOLY COMMUNION (together, using whatever food & drink you have on hand)

OPPORTUNITIES TO BE PART OF THE GOOD NEWS

SINGING OUR THANKS & 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!

CHARGE & BLESSING

NOTE ABOUT COMMUNION

For our celebration of the Sacrament of Holy Communion / The Eucharist / The Lord's Supper this Sunday in the sanctuary, we'll say thank-you for the gift of pre-packed "astronaut communion" over the last year, as pandemic needs dictated, and say farewell, as well, as we let it go and embark on a new way of sharing the bread and cup of Christ's table.

This Sunday, those present in the sanctuary who wish to partake will be invited to come forward down the center aisle to receive a piece of gluten-free bread from a Deacon (who will be masked) and take for themselves a serving of juice (pre-set in a compostable cup). We'll see how it works—it's been a long time since we've shared with one another in this way—but the Deacons are excited simultaneously to resume their role as servants at the table and explore a simpler way to do that than we've employed in the past.

Come, friends, taste and see the goodness of our God!

The church office will be open fewer hours next week (8/8 to 8/12), from 9am to noon, to accommodate vacation schedules.



Thank you, Church!

Together we donated \$540, and with the Outreach Committee's \$500 match, Storytime Crafts will get \$1,040 to support their mission of creating book-rich environments for children, especially those who need them most.



Summer **Toilet Paper Drive** to Help Afghan & Ukrainian Refugees

Please join the Outreach Committee and the International Institute of New England (IINE) in collecting toilet paper this summer (June, July, and August) for refugees and refugee families resettling in the U.S. without even the most basic of necessities. Pick up an extra package or two each time you do your shopping this summer and bring it to church. **Or you can order some and have it sent directly from our Amazon Wish List by [clicking here](#).** (Any brand of

toilet paper will do, but you might consider the bamboo or 100% recycled paper as eco-friendlier options.) We'll collect it all summer and donate it to IINE in September. And, do we have to say it? No opened packages, please!



Sign Up NOW to Volunteer with Family Promise Metrowest's New Permanent Shelter

Family Promise Metrowest is looking to “support churches” like ours for volunteers to prepare and serve meals and join the guests for dinner in their brand-new permanent shelter (the new shelter will hold up to three families at any given time). The Outreach Committee will divide up the work, engaging people in different roles and creating a cadre of experienced helpers. Some will prepare food in Needham and others will deliver food . . . and possibly serve.

Those who prepare food do not require training. Those who serve and interact with the guests are asked to complete a short, two-module orientation, which has been completely revamped. If you want to volunteer or would like more information, contact Vance Fernandez, vancefernandez@hotmail.com.

O For a World

1. O for a world where ev - ery - one re - spects each oth - er's ways,
2. O for a world where goods are shared and mis - er - y re - lieved,
3. We wel - come one world fam - i - ly and strug - gle with each choice
4. The poor are rich, the weak are strong, the fool - ish ones are wise.
5. O for a world pre - par - ing for God's glo - rious reign of peace,

where love is lived and all is done with jus - tice and with praise.
where truth is spo - ken, chil - dren spared, and e - qual - i - ty a - chieved.
that o - pens us to u - ni - ty and gives our vi - sion voice.
Tell all who mourn: out - casts be - long, who per - ish - es will rise.
where time and tears will be no more, and all but love will cease.

Faith Begins With Letting Go

Faith be - gins with let - ting go, giv - ing up what
Faith en - dures by hold - ing on, keep - ing mem' - ry's
Faith ma - tures by reach - ing out, stretch - ing minds, en -
Faith from time to time must leap, leave be - hind a

had seemed sure, ta - king risks and pres - sing on,
roots a - live so that hope may bear its fruit;
larg - ing hearts, shar - ing strug - gles, liv - ing prayer,
god too small, dream in - stead an un - known God,

though the way feels less se - cure: pil - gri - mage both
pro - mise - fed, our souls will thrive, not through me - rit
bind - ing up the bro - ken parts; till we find the
Love e - nough to em - brace all. Like our fore - bears,

right and odd, trust - ting all our life to God.
we pos - sess but by God's great faith - ful - ness.
com - mon - place ripe with with - ness to God's grace.
we're set free to i - mag - ine what can be.