



Illustration by Heather Brockman Lee

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

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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)*

**ANTHEM**

*Polonaise opus posthumous, by F. Chopin  
Valerie Becker, piano*

**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 kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.**

**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**

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## 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!

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

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### **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\*\*](mailto:vancefernandez@hotmail.com).

## **Hymn 1: O For a World**

O for a world where everyone respects each other's ways,  
where love is lived and all is done with justice and with praise.

O for a world where goods are shared and misery relieved,  
where truth is spoken, children spared, and equality achieved.

We welcome one world family and struggle with each choice  
that opens us to unity and gives our vision voice.

The poor are rich, the weak are strong, the foolish ones are wise.  
Tell all who mourn: outcasts belong, who perishes will rise.

O for a world preparing for God's glorious reign of peace,  
where time and tears will be no more, and all but love will cease.

## Hymn 2: Faith Begins With Letting Go

Faith begins with letting go, giving up what had seemed sure,  
taking risks and pressing on, though the way feels less secure:  
pilgrimage both right and odd, trusting all our life to God.

Faith endures by holding on, keeping mem'ry's roots alive  
so that hope may bear its fruit; promise-fed, our souls will thrive,  
not through merit we possess but by God's great faithfulness.

Faith matures by reaching out, stretching minds, enlarging hearts,  
sharing struggles, living prayer, binding up the broken parts;  
till we find the common place ripe with witness to God's grace.

Faith from time to time must leap, leave behind a god too small,  
dream instead an unknown God, Love enough to embrace all.  
Like our forebears, we're set free to imagine what can be.

*Text: v1-3 C. Daws (1996), v4 J Gage (2022): TUNE:DIX (C. Kocher, 1838)*