

“Holy Humor” Sunday

Laughing in the Face of Death



Easter means the joke is on the powers of sin & death

Sunday, 4/12 @ 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*
Darlene Wong, *director for children & youth*
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Tom Mollerus, *moderator*
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Welcome! 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.*

Our Church Covenant *At the Congregational Church of Needham, United Church of Christ, we strive to be a joyful, welcoming Christian Community. We seek to be faithful in a world torn by suffering, injustice, oppression, and war. We are inspired by God, Christ's Ministry, and the examples of other faithful people. We join together in worship and song, fellowship, study, and mission to embrace the risks and challenges of continuing Christ's ministry. We 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.*

Our Open and Affirming Covenant *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. We 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.*

If you are a guest with us today, a special welcome to you! We'd love to know that you're here. Please sign in using the QR code at the top of this page or the physical attendance sheet in the narthex/foyer. If you'd like to learn more about our church or what it means to be a member here, please reach out to Rev. John at revjohn@needhamucc.org.

Children of all ages are always welcome in worship! Quiet books and pew pals (soft toys) are available in the narthex/foyer just outside the sanctuary doors. All accessible bathrooms have **changing tables**.

WIFI in the sanctuary: UCC_Guest, password: needhamucc

FOR TODAY:

There is no Sunday school today. Kids are invited to remain in worship with their families to enjoy worship today. There are special pew activity bags available in the lobby. Ask a greeter for help locating one.

For today's celebration of the Sacrament of Holy Communion / The Eucharist / The Lord's Supper, those in the sanctuary who wish to participate will be invited to come down the center aisle to receive a piece of gluten-free bread and a small sip of non-alcoholic juice in a compostable cup. Folks participating online, we hope you prepare something to eat and drink to participate with the body. **ALL ARE INVITED TO SHARE, INCLUDING CHILDREN.** You need not be a member of this church or any church to participate but simply desire to receive this blessing in your life.



Baby Basics Groceries Ongoing Food Collection

Every Sunday we collect specific proteins for the groceries we give to the families accessing diapers through Baby Basics every other month. We're asking for large jars of natural (no sugar added) **peanut butter**; small cans of **tuna in water**; large cans of **chicken**; and bags of **dried beans**.

April 12, 2026: 2nd Sunday in Easter, Holy Humor Sunday

You shall go out in joy and be led back in peace; the mountains and hills before you shall burst into song, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands. Instead of the thorn shall come up the cypress; instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle, and it shall be to the Lord for a memorial, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off.

– Isaiah 55: 12-13

PRELUDE

Sonata No.1 in g minor, *Andante*, by G.F. Handel
Alan Clayton-Matthews, *recorder*; Valerie Becker, *piano*

WELCOME

Rev. John MacIver Gage

CALL TO WORSHIP

One: Alleluia! Christ is risen!

Many: Christ is risen indeed! Alleluia!

One: We believe in God, who made us in Their own image.

Many: We live, we laugh, we love, because our They lives and loves and laughs with joy.

One: We believe in Jesus the Christ, the pioneer and perfecter of our faith.

Many: He had the last laugh on death when he rose again at Easter and invites us to rise to new life, too.

One: We believe in the Holy Spirit, our comforter, and our challenger.

Many: She upsets unjust apple carts and overturns unhealthy expectations to make way for joyful transformation.

One: Forgive us, God, when we take ourselves too seriously, when we don't claim the happiness that is ours as your children and share it with our neighbors,

Many: when we forget that you will always have the last laugh over sin and death, and that your purpose is always joy for the world.

One: Alleluia! Christ is risen!

Many: Christ is risen indeed! Alleluia!

HYMN

Joy to the World! (see below)

LAUGHTER BREAK

GREETING ONE ANOTHER IN PEACE (“Peace be with you / **And also with you**”)

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

El Señor Resucito

A - le - lu - ya! A - le - lu - ya! A - le - lu - ya! A - le -
 Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le -

lu - ya! A - le lu - ya! A - le - lu - ya! El Señ or re - su - ci to!
 lu - ia! Al - le lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia! Yes, the Lord is ris'n in - deed!

READING FROM SCRIPTURE

from the Gospels, John 16:16-22

LAUGHTER BREAK

REFLECTION

Laughing in the Face of Death

Rev. John MacIver Gage

HYMN

Siyahamba ("We Are Marching in the Light of God") (see below)

LAUGHTER BREAK

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

SINGING THE LORD'S PRAYER (see below)

MUSICAL OFFERING

Sonata No.1 in g minor, *Andante*, by G.F. Handel

Alan Clayton-Matthews, *recorder*; Valerie Becker, *piano*

LAUGHTER BREAK

SHARING THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION

For today's celebration of the Sacrament of Holy Communion / The Eucharist / The Lord's Supper, those in the sanctuary who wish to participate will be invited to come down the center aisle to receive a piece of gluten-free bread and a small sip of non-alcoholic juice in a compostable cup. Folks participating online, we hope you prepare something to eat and drink to participate with the body. ALL ARE INVITED TO SHARE, INCLUDING CHILDREN. You need not be a member of this church or any church to participate but simply desire to receive this blessing in your life.

INVITATION TO DEEPER RELATIONSHIP

Feeling like you might like to make this congregation your church home? Curious to learn more about who we are and how we practice our faith and what membership means here? Reach out to Rev. John at revjohn@needhamucc.org

PARTNERING IN THE GOOD NEWS

HYMN

Christ Is Risen! Shout Hosanna! (see below)

LAUGHTER BREAK

WE ARE BLESSED TO BE A BLESSING

POSTLUDE



Help Us Nurture Faith with the Youngest Among Us

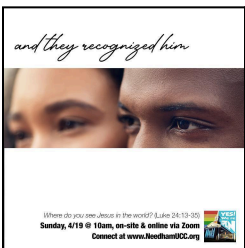
Every Sunday we need two non-related adults—a teacher and an assistant—to staff our Sunday School classroom. Ms. Darlene Wong, our Director for Children & Youth, is our teacher. Will you be the assistant? No experience is needed. Please **sign up here** to help.

Questions about our Children & Youth Ministries? Email Darlene Wong at childrenandyouth@needhamucc.org

OPPORTUNITIES TO GET INVOLVED: April 12, 2026



Guatemala Partnership Delegation Report-Back Postponed New Date and Time TBD



And They Recognized Him

4/19 @ 10am, LIVE! on-site & online via Zoom at <http://zoom.us/j/907548568>

We're reminded that Jesus' Easter resurrection isn't the end of a story but the beginning of a whole new story. The Spirit of Christ is freed to show up whenever and wherever and to whomever God directs. The disciples attempting to flee Jerusalem and their own grief at Jesus' death along the road to Emmaus are surprised to recognize him in the ordinary act of breaking bread. How do we recognize Jesus in our everyday lives today? Are we even looking? (Luke 24:13-35)



An All-Ages, Hands-On SermonCraft for Earth Sunday

Gorilla Gardening

4/26 @ 10am, LIVE! on-site & online via Zoom at <http://zoom.us/j/907548568>

On this Earth Sunday, when we celebrate the goodness of creation and our call to work for climate care and climate justice, members of our Environmental Ministries Team will lead an environmentally-themed worship service they've helped create and everyone, young and old, will get our hands dirty, literally, making "seed balls"—balls of clay, soil, and the seeds of native flowering plants—to take out into the world to do some "guerilla gardening" (get it?) in vacant lots, forest trails, and even our own backyards. Go forth and grow forth, people of God!



Annual Women's Retreat: Friday & Saturday, 5/8 & 9

Open all women—cisgender & transgender—as well as nonbinary people who feel aligned with a women-centered space

Join us for an overnight stay and three meals at the Craigville Retreat Center in Centerville on Cape Cod. The theme this year is "What Matters." The space can hold up to 23 people in a dorm-like setting and the cost per person is \$160. Events include meals together, beach walks, yoga, music, group discussions, a craft, a communion service and overall camaraderie. To reserve your spot,

please mail or drop off a check made out to the Congregational Church of Needham, with "Women's Retreat" in the memo section, as well as a note listing your email address, phone number, and any food allergies or dietary restrictions you may have. Since space is limited, reserve your spot now. Two weeks before the program you will get an email with more specifics. Questions? Feel free to reach out to Stephanie Oddleifson, a member of the planning team, at

soddleifson@gmail.com.

Can you find Jesus in this picture of the tomb on Easter morning?



Why not?

Because,

as the angel said,

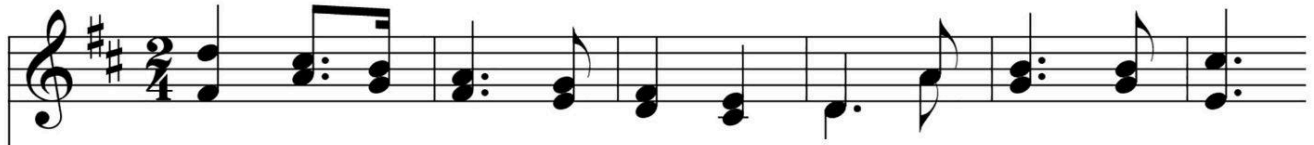
He is

not here.

He has been

raised!

Joy to the World!



Joy to the world! The Lord's a - live! A - wake, re - joice,
Joy to the world! The emp - ty tomb pro - claims a vic -
Joy to the world! Our Sav - ior reigns. Let heav'n and earth

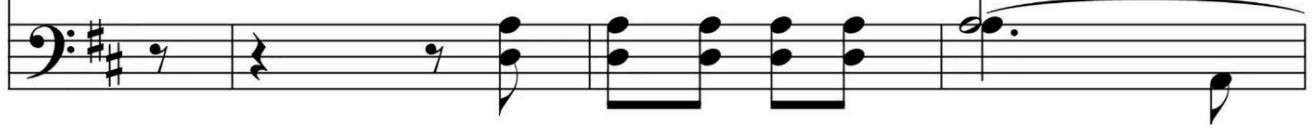


and sing! It's just as he had said. He's ris - en from the dead.
tor - y! by love com - pel - ling a great dis - pel - ling
pro - claim the glor - ies of his right - teous - ness



Sal - va - tion now he brings, sal - va - tion now he
of sad - ness in the world, of sad - ness in the
and won - ders of God's love, and won - ders of God's

Sal - va - tion now he brings,



sal -



brings, sal - va - tion, sal - va - tion now he brings.
world, of sad - ness, of sad - ness in the world.
love, and won - ders, and won - ders of God's love.



va - tion now he brings,

Siyahamba ("We Are Marching in the Light of God")

Si - ya - hamb' _____ e - ku - kha - nyen' kwen - khos', si - ya -
 We are march - ing in the light of God, we are
 danc - ing
 laugh - ing
 hop - ing

1. *- hamb' e - ku - kha - nyen' kwen - khos. _____*
 march - ing in the light of God. _____
 2. *- hamb' e - ku - kha - nyen' kwen kha -*
 march - ing in the light of God,

- nyen' kwen - khos' _____ si - ya - ham - ba
 we are march - ing, *ham - ba, si - ya -*
 march - ing, we are

- ham - ba ham - ba si - ya - hamb' e - ku - kha - nyen' kwen - khos'. _____
 march - ing, march - ing, we are march - ing in the light of God. _____

The Lord's Prayer

Our God in heav-en, ho - ly is your
name, your reign come, your will done, on earth as in heav-en.
Give us to - day our dai - ly bread, and help us for - give, as
we have been for - giv - en. In the time of tri - al
lead us in - to light, for yours is the king-dom, and the pow-er, and the
glo - ry, for - ev - er. Our God, in heav-en,
ho - ly is your name, ho - ly is your name.

WORDS: Matt. 6:9-13, adapt. by Mark A. Miller and Laurie Zelman
MUSIC: Mark A. Miller

Christ is Risen! Shout Hosanna!

Christ is ris - en! Shout Ho - san - na! Cel - e - brate this day of days!
Christ is ris - en! Raise your spir - its from the cav - erns of de - spair.
Christ is ris - ent! Earth and heav - en nev - er - more shall be the same.

Christ is ris - en! Hush in won - der: all cre - a - tion is a - mazed.
Walk with glad - ness in the morn - ing. See what love can do and dare.
Break the bread of new cre - a - tion where the world is still in pain.

In the des - ert all - sur - round - ing, see a spread - ing tree has grown.
Drink the wine of res - ur - rec - tion, not a ser - vant, but a friend.
Tell its grim, de - mon - ic cho - rus: "Christ is ris - en! Get you gone!"

Heal - ing leaves of grace a - bound - ing bring a taste of love un - known.
Je - sus is our strong com - pan - ion. Joy and peace shall nev - er end.
God, the First and Last is with us. Sing Ho - san - na, ev - ery - one!

Text: B. Wren (1986); Tune: HYMN TO JOY